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THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

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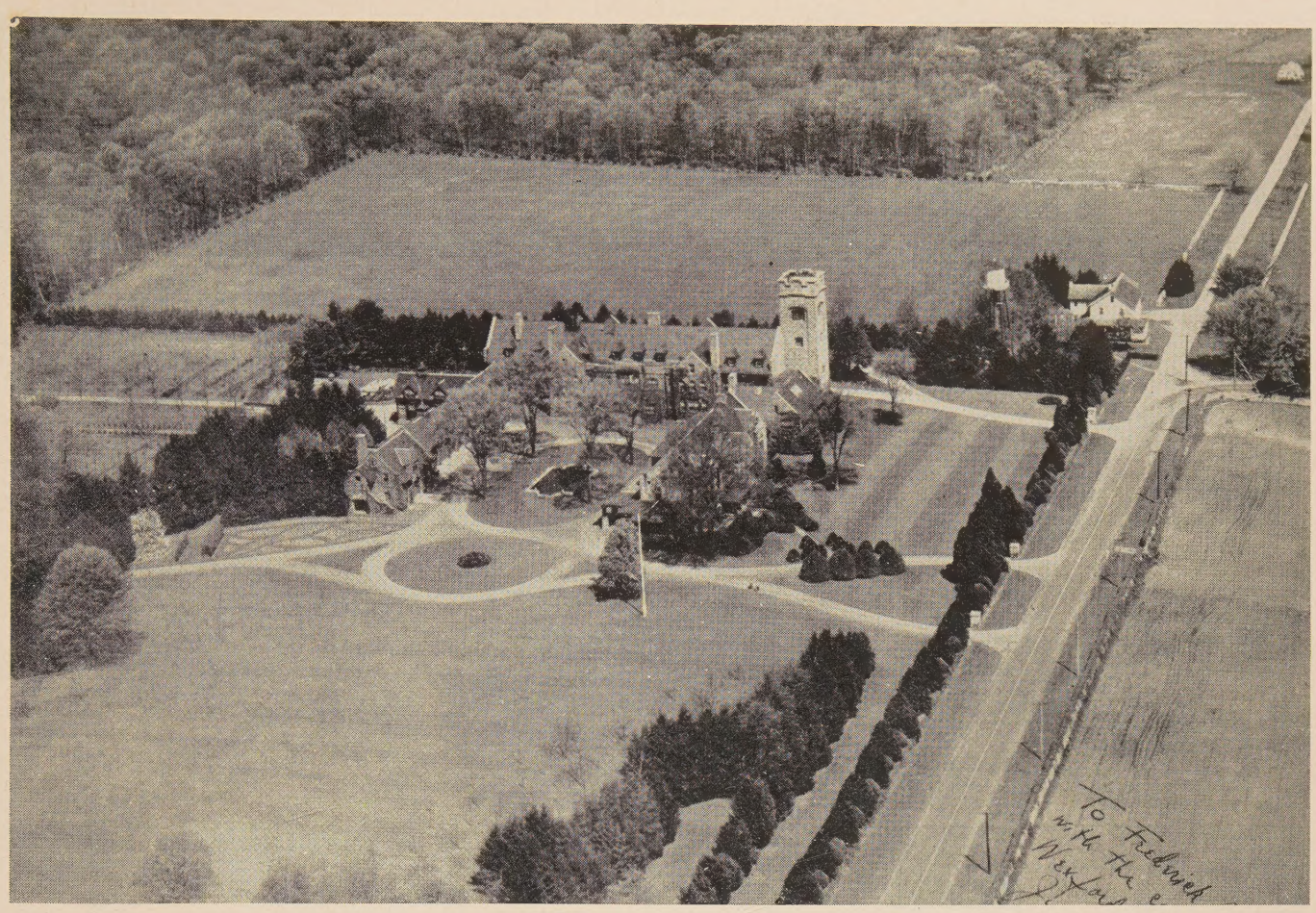

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(Providence Journal, October 26, 1950)

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READER MEETS "OLD FRIENDS"

My first copy of ETERNITY has arrived and "lifted me up exceedingly." My heart just glowed as I read its fine articles. I am very familiar with some of the writers mostly through their books. G. Campbell Morgan's reprinted article brought a special blessing for he was such a wonderful spiritual leader. I have books by Northcote Deck and Oswald Smith, so their articles seemed like old friends again coming into my life. "All Scripture . . . Is Profitable" by Fred Mitchell proved very profitable to me also. And I cannot possibly tell you of the beauty of Christ's character and the wonder of His complete sacrifice for us which is brought out in your Editor's article "Acquitting a Guilty Man." Indeed every article in the September issue delighted my soul.

I am a semi-invalid and it just seems that this magazine is written for my upbuilding and edification. Now to "show forth" everything I gain in such a magazine—God bless you all and bring forth the fruit it so richly deserves.

BESSIE ECKBLOOM

Jamestown, N. Y.

HEINOUS MACHINATIONS

Though I am not addicted to writing "fan" letters, it would surely be difficult to refrain from expressing my commendation of the August issue of ETERNITY which was devoted to a revelation of certain Roman Catholic fallacies, particularly as they pertain to this invidious matter of Mary-Worship. Having seen so many of the Church's heinous machinations at work during a visit to Italy this past summer, I am peculiarly attuned to appreciate the balanced, provocative, and thorough study with which you endowed this special issue. Particularly apposite was your emphasis on the Scriptural bases which make the Roman Catholic position untenable as far as so many of their dogmatic and doctrinal utterances are concerned.

When Christians themselves are so uninformed as to declare that there are few real or singularly important differences between the Protestant and Catholic points of view, then it is imperative that such articles as have appeared in ETERNITY this past month be carefully read and studied.

ROBERT H. NEWALL

Department of English
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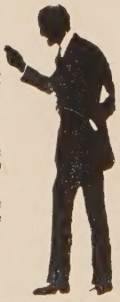

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THE "WORDLESS SERMON"

In my first eager leafing through the pages of ETERNITY as soon as it arrived to see what treats were in store, the illustration for Vance Havner's article on page 14 caught my attention—and wouldn't let me go. I looked and looked, and looked some more. Somehow the impact of the picture was really felt and I wondered if it wouldn't do the same for countless others.

All honor to the artist, who has intriguingly caught the air of polite, reluctant indifference so prevalent today. I am sure that our fearless "New Testament prophet," brother Havner, relentless in his goading of the saints asleep in the pews, was well pleased with the illustration.

ROSE MARIE FINK

Knox, Pa.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Donald Grey Barnhouse, Editor of Eternity: December 1, 8, 15—YMCA Auditorium, Lancaster, Penna.; December 3, 10, 17, 24, 31—Tenth Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia; December 4, 11, 18—St. Luke's Lutheran Church, 46th Street west of 8th Ave., New York City; December 5—First Brethren Church, 12th and E Streets, Washington, D. C.; December 6, 13—Northminster Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland; December 7, 14—St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, York, Pa.

William Allan Dean, Pastor, Aldan Union Church, Aldan, Pa.: December 4, 11, 18—First Presbyterian Church, Norristown, Pa.; December 5, 12—Bethany Temple Presbyterian Church (2:30 P.M.) Philadelphia; December 5, 12, 19—Evangelical United Brethren Church, 12th and Wyoming, Philadelphia, Pa.

Robert R. Fritsch, Emeritus Professor, English Bible, Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa.: December 4 through 8—Bible Conference, Presbyterian Church, Linden, Pa.; December 12 through 14—Bible Conference, Martinsburg, Pa.; December 24th—Men's Bible Class, Allentown, Pa.; December 30—Youth Fellowship, Reading, Pa.

Vance Havner, Writer and Bible Conference Speaker: November 27 to December 3—Central Baptist Church, Corbin, Kentucky.

Peter R. Joshua, Evangelist and Bible Conference Speaker: November 26 through December 9—LaMarque, Texas; December 10 through December 17— Galveston, Texas; December 23 through January 14—St. Petersburg, Florida.

Clarence E. Mason, Jr., Dean, Philadelphia School of the Bible, Philadelphia: December 3—Fifth Baptist Church, Phila.; December 5, 6, 7—Emmanuel Baptist Church, Dayton, Ohio; December 8—Faith and Life Conference, Brooktondale, N. Y.; December 9—Brooktondale, N. Y. Youth for Christ; December 10—Brooktondale, N. Y. Baptist Church; December 16—Youth for Christ, Harrisburg, Penna.

William A. Mierop, President, Bible Institute of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia: December 3 (A.M.) Alloway Baptist Church, Alloway, N. J.; December 3 (P.M.) Canton Baptist Church, Canton, N. J.; December 9—East Chester County Youth for Christ, Malvern, Pa.; December 10—Bridgeport Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Pa.; December 15—Ukranian Baptist Church, Camden, N. J.; December 16—Beverly Hills United Presbyterian Church, Beverly Hills, Pa.

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NATIVITY

This is by far the best name for the day of joy which we are about to celebrate the birth-day of our Lord. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). This is the Nativity.

That was the incomparable day. The people that had once walked in darkness (Isa. 9:2) by now were sitting in darkness (Mt. 4:16). God sent the great light to illuminate the darkness of hearts and to lift men from the abyss of eternal darkness. No human eye could pierce those shadows. The sin of Adam and Eve had caused this darkness to roll over the world and the night would have been eternal without the coming of the Light of the world. The prince of darkness reigned, but the Prince of light was born and sent into this world. The prince of death ruled, but the Lord of life had come. The power of mortality thrusts every generation into the grave-yard, but the Baby was born who will banish all the powers of the enemy and bring immortality through the Gospel.

God's love is all the greater when it is realized what He left in order to come here. Everything that is of earth can be contrasted with that which is of Heaven. Yet He left it all for our redemption.

This is why the greatest thought of the Nativity must ever be, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant; and was made in the likeness of men" (Phil. 2:5-7).

How great a sin to live in darkness after the Light has come. If the Lord Jesus Christ is not your Saviour from sin, and then Lord of your life, the darkness of sin is still upon your soul, your eyes are still blinded and your life is empty of all that God wants you to have.

Today He says to you, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

NEXT MONTH:

The Editor writes his annual survey of world events

The Secret of Fearlessness

By T. Stanley Soltau

Eternity

THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH

Volume 1 DECEMBER 1950 Number 9

Donald Grey Barnhouse
Editor

Mary A. Bennett
Managing Editor

Paul A. Hopkins
Business Manager

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DEDICATION

Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us to be a kingdom and to be priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen. (Rev. 1:5, 6).

Pray with us on Friday mornings that God may bless and extend the ministry of Eternity and The Bible Study Hour to His everlasting glory.

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THE TWO GENEALOGIES OF JESUS

By DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE

The theme of the opening verses of Paul's epistle to the Romans is the Gospel of God. The good news originated in the love of the Father, truth centers in His Son, and that truth was announced in the Old Testament.

In the third verse we read that the Gospel is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." There are two ways in which the Gospel concerns the Lord Jesus Christ. It concerns His person and His work. The Gospel consists in the definition of who He is and in the setting forth of what He has done. The two are interdependent. Suppose for a moment that a man owed an impossibly large debt at the bank. Another man walks in and says to the bank official, "I want to be responsible for that debt." If the man is as bad a bankrupt as the debtor, the gesture is meaningless. If the man is rich beyond any boundaries of human debt, then the gesture becomes an act of grace in behalf of the debtor. The value of what he promises to do depends entirely on his own position and worth.

If an angel had come to seek and save that which was lost, his gesture would have been of no value for an angel could not suffer for an infinite number of sinners. Only the Son of God could come forth to take the place of sinners and be wounded for their transgressions and be bruised for their iniquities. One of our greatest hymns sets forth this fact.

> There was no other good enough
> To pay the price of sin,
> He only could unlock the gate
> Of Heaven, and let us in.

"Who Art Thou, Lord?"

It is this fact of the person of our Lord that gives all value to what He said and what He did. At times there are people who become impatient with us for clinging to the creed and pointing out that truth is the essential foundation of all our thinking. One preacher once said over the radio, "I want no creed but deeds. Give me a deed and you can have your creeds. Even Paul, struck down on the Damascus road began his Christian life with the question, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' " I want you to see how subtle and Satanic such a saying is. For if you turn to the story of Paul's conversion in the ninth of Acts, you will see that He did not begin by asking "What wilt Thou have me to do?" There was another question that went before this one. The first question was, "Who art Thou, Lord?" And the answer to that question constitutes your creed. You do have a creed, whether you will or not. When the question is asked, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" your answer constitutes your creed.

My answer to that question is found in these verses in the first chapter of Romans. There are two verbs that include the whole of the answer. We read that He "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." The two verbs are "made" and "declared." Jesus Christ was made; Jesus Christ was declared. If you understand those two verbs, you will have the Christ of the Bible. If you do not understand those two verbs, you are in danger of having what Paul elsewhere calls "another Jesus," and "another Gospel."

Three times in the Bible the Lord God describes His Son Jesus Christ in terms of two different verbs. In the Old Testament prophecy of Isaiah we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" (Isa. 9:6). As a child He was born, as a Son He was given. In Galatians the Holy Spirit announces, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:4). He was made in His human nature and sent in His divine nature. Put the various passages with our text in Romans and you find the two natures of Christ. In His humanity He was born, made according to the flesh, made of a woman. In His Godhead, He was declared, given, sent forth. This double line of teaching is found throughout the Bible.

One of the reasons that Jesus was rejected when He was here on earth was because of the fact that people are inclined to look for what they most want to find. The Old Testament has many, many verses about the suffering Messiah, but they are overpowered by the brilliance of the promises concerning His coming glory. When He came to fulfill the first line of prophecies they failed to recognize Him because they had their minds so full of the blue print of what they expected Messiah to be. If you wish to understand the psychology of Israel at the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus, think of the psychology of the Norwegians, the Hollanders, or the French under the dominion of Hitler. For Palestine was an occupied country when Christ was born. It was in the days of Caesar Augustus that there went out a decree that all the world should be taxed (Lk. 2:1), and Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem because of that Roman decree. The reason tax collectors were classed with harlots was because they were working for the enemy; during the last war they would have been called quislings, instead of publicans. The people were looking for relief from the foreign enemy. They turned to the Old Testament and found verses which said that a splendid, resistless sovereign would come forth to rule with a rod of iron, and to dash His enemies to pieces as a potter's vessel (Psa. 2:9). They began to look at every possible national leader in terms of this pattern.

When Jesus came forth with His unquestionable supernatural power they turned to Him immediately with questions concerning His identity. They asked Him the same questions they had asked John the Baptist. Evidently the questions were a sort of checklist to be put to anyone who lifted his head above the ruck of the oppressed. But where John the Baptist confessed freely that he was not the Messiah, the Lord Jesus boldly claimed to be the Messiah. When He failed to act as they thought the Messiah should act in accordance with the second line of Bible prophecy, they rejected Him, and thus refused the first line of Bible prophecy. The Bible is incomprehensible without the realization that Christ came the first time to save individual sinners from their individual sins and that He must come the second time to redeem society and civilization and government. The heart teaching of the whole of the Word of God is that man is incapable of redeeming his society, and the true business of the church of Jesus Christ is to save as many individuals as possible from the wreckage before the final wrecking comes.

The God-Man

The Bible is never afraid to put the twin truths of the humanity and deity of Christ in the same verse. Our text proclaims that He was both made and declared. We must not fall into the theological trap of thinking that Jesus Christ was merely a divine man, or into the other error of thinking that He was a human God. He was neither of these. He was and is the God-Man, absolutely human and absolutely deity. He was not the son of God in the sense that fallen sons of Adam's race are creatures of God. A few years ago, in a western city, a lecturer of the board of lectureship of a certain modern religion was giving a free lecture on his concept of religion. In the question period that followed someone asked Him if he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. The lecturer answered, "I would as soon think of denying that Jesus was the Son of God as I would that I am a son of God, that we all are sons of God." The questioner continued by asking if he believed in the divinity of Christ. The speaker answered that he would no more deny that divinity than he would deny his own divinity.

When we speak of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ we are not talking about any such sonship or any such divinity. Fifty years ago it was possible to speak of the divinity of Jesus Christ and the meaning was popularly understood. Little by little the modernist adulterated the phrase, forcing the Christian to adopt the phrase, the deity of Christ. The Devil is at work on the meaning of that phrase. We may have to return to the Biblical phrase, and speak of the eternal godhead of the Lord Jesus. If necessary we will resort to locutions and affirm that we ever believe that the Lord Jesus Christ eternally existed as the second person of the Godhead, co-eternal and co-equal with the Father. Everything that the Lord God Almighty is to me, so is Jesus Christ to me. I have no other God than the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Storm Stilled

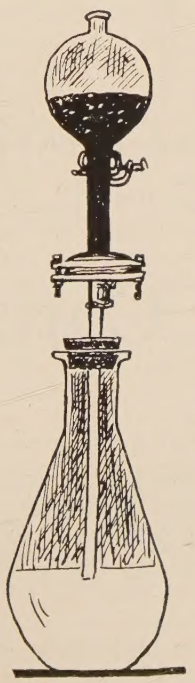
The Bible teaches the oneness of Christ in His two natures not only in direct verses like the text we have before us today, but also by the implications of the Gospel stories of events of His life. For example, take the story of Christ and the storm. Is there anything more human than that picture of the Lord, tired out and fast asleep in the boat? If you read the narratives closely, you will find that it was at evening time, the evening of one of the most difficult days of His ministry. It was the day when first He pronounced woes upon the cities, the day when first He excoriated the Pharisees, the day when His family thought that He had lost His mind and He announced that He would never listen to any plea that came to Him from the Virgin Mary. It was the day when, for the first time, He had spoken in parables because He knew that the break with the religious leaders had come and that henceforward He would no longer cast the pearls of His teaching before their swinish minds. He was tired out, exhausted, at the end of that long hard day. The passage in Mark says "they took Him even as He was in the ship." "Even as He was:" it is a phrase that shows that there was something about His condition that drew the attention of the disciples. He lay down in the boat and went to sleep. I have been on the Sea of Galilee when it was rough and choppy, but it is capable of real storms. On this night the storm was so terrible that even the fishermen called it a great storm. Jesus was so tired that the wind, the storm, the rush of water into the boat did not awaken Him.

Now stop a moment and think. Is there anything more human than a man, tired out, fast asleep with

the sleep of sheer exhaustion? The disciples awakened Him. The text thrills to the sudden change. "He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, 'Peace be still.' And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." The disciples marveled and said, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the waves obey Him?" (Mk. 4:41). The fact is that humanity and deity were together in the same boat, yes, in the same physical body. We need never fear bringing the two doctrines together. Jesus Christ was made and declared. He is man but He is God.

The Tribute Money

We will set forth one more example of this double presentation of the two natures of the God-Man. We take the story of the tribute money. The world says that there is nothing more sure than death and taxes. Certainly there is nothing more human than being taxed. The Romans called their poll tax a capitation or head tax. The day came in the life of that little land, dominated by Rome, to collect the head tax. The tax collector said to Peter, "Does your Master pay taxes?" The very fact that the question was asked shows that even the tax collector recognized that there was something in Jesus Christ above and beyond all other men. Now it was not Peter's place to answer for his Lord, but he rushed in as he usually did, according to his impetuous nature, and agreed that the Lord would pay taxes. When Peter arrived at the house where he was staying, the Lord took him aside and began to talk with him quietly. He asked Peter if he recognized that kings exempted themselves from paying taxes but took money from others so that they might be free. Peter assented to this and the Lord pointed out that because He Himself was King, it would be natural that He should be exempt, and His disciples with Him. But that no offense might be given to the worldlings, He told Peter to go ahead and pay the taxes. But the method of securing the money is startling. In act and fact He said to Peter: Go down to My sea of Galilee, which I created. I have had one of My creatures lose a coin in the water, and My law of gravity carried it down where I had one of My fish take it into his mouth. You go fishing and I will have that fish come to your hook. You take the fish and take the coin out of its mouth, and it will be a coin of sufficient value to pay your taxes and Mine. What a human thing to pay taxes! And what a divine way of paying them! Humanity and deity in the same story. Humanity is subject to the laws of the land. Deity knows the movements of a fish in the sea, knows the position of a lost coin, regulates the power of the movements of the fish. I sometimes hope that Peter had faith enough not to use any bait. That fish would have climbed the string if necessary to fulfill such orders as these.



The whitest of all white pigments is titanium dioxide, which is made from ilmenite, a black sand. This transformation, taking five days, requires several complicated chemical processes, after which the substance is calcinated at a high temperature and ground into a fine powder. Though your sins be as ilmenite they shall be as white as titanium dioxide. This transformation, taking but an instant, requires a look away from self to the cross of Jesus Christ, after which the believer knows a spiritual increase of temperature, and glows for the Lord Jesus Christ. Chemists take notice.

The Virgin Birth

Our text is a refutation of those who have attacked the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ on the ground that it is mentioned in only two Gospels. The argument of the attackers is that a doctrine so important would be given a much larger place in the Word of God. The fact is that the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ is taught in many places in the Scripture. We find it in the book of Genesis. When Adam and Eve had sinned, God pronounced the curse upon Satan in the following words: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; he shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3:15). Thus on the first pages of the Bible it is announced that the Redeemer who shall come will be the seed of the woman.

In the prophecy of Isaiah, written long before the time of Christ, we read the same truth. It is interesting to know, by the way, that a complete manuscript of the book of Isaiah has recently been found in Palestine, dating to the second century before Christ, the oldest existing Biblical manuscript in the world. In the seventh chapter of that prophet we read, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). Enemies of the Lord have sought their utmost to discredit this verse, have attempted to teach that the word virgin did not imply virginity, but the prophecy stands, and the New Testament quotes it, naming the Lord Jesus as the fulfilment of the prophecy, and as being Immanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us.

Matthew and Luke say flatly that Mary conceived the Lord Jesus Christ when she had never known a man, and Matthew states that Joseph first thought to put her away because he knew that he had never been with her and therefore supposed that the child was the child of her fornication with some other man. It took the heavenly vision to show him the truth of the matter and lead him to continue the relationship and acknowledge the child when Jesus was finally born, thus protecting Mary from the sneers of the world and fulfilling the divine plan for the coming of the Saviour.

Two Genealogies

One of the greatest proofs of the fact of the Virgin Birth is in the fact there are two genealogies of Jesus, given in Matthew and Luke. It may interest you to know how I once set forth this proof before a class in university. When I returned to America in 1925 after seven years of travel and study in Europe, I became an assistant in the history department of the University of Pennsylvania, and in my second year there worked with Dr. Walter Hyde, head of the department of ancient history. The method of teaching was that Dr. Hyde lectured twice a week to about two hundred students, and that I, the young assistant, had them for one hour a week in smaller sections. Dr. Hyde lectured on the rise of Christianity and took the agnostic position before the

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God's enemies wonder at us when we do wrong.

Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel. Isaiah 7:14.

By A. RENDLE SHORT

The Virgin Birth of Christ

There are many shades of Christian belief, and it is often difficult to know just what a preacher or writer does believe. Indeed, some of them give the impression that they do not know themselves. The difficulty is all the greater since terms used may mean one thing to one person and quite another to someone else.

A teacher may describe himself as an evangelical, he may say that the Bible is an inspired book, and that Jesus Christ was a divine person; we learn later that his evangel is quite unlike Paul's, that he thinks Shakespeare and Mozart were inspired at times, and that there

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is a spark of the divine in all of us. Churches profess to adhere to evangelical doctrine and use terms to describe it which at first sight look unimpeachably orthodox, but the interpretation they put upon those terms is far removed from that understood by the ordinary Christian.

But when a verdict has to be given about the virgin birth of Christ, doctrinal error has to come out into the open. If it is unhesitatingly believed that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, testimony is borne both to His diety, and to the veracity of Holy Scripture. If there is hesitation, or if it is argued that there must have been a human father, the springs of belief are poisoned at the source, and any kind of error may be entertained. Here is the acid test of orthodox faith.

Those who desire to believe, and who try to convince others, greatly weaken the substructure of their confidence if they build on the wrong foundations, and they lay themselves open to a shattering reply. If it is argued that Jesus Christ must be a divine Person because God was His Father, and we must believe that His mother was a virgin because the first and third Gospels tell us so, it will probably be replied, "Why do not the second and fourth Gospels say anything about it? Why do the sermons in the Acts, and the epistles, never mention it? Is the story not contrary to all human experience? Does it not rest solely on the word of a woman, and had she not her honor to defend?" In other words, the whole Christian tradition is rested on the credibility of the Virgin Mary.

Of course, this is utterly wrong, but we need to see why it is wrong. Let us go back to the first proclamation of the Christian faith. Peter, and Paul, in their preaching as recorded in the Acts, rested their conviction of the diety of Christ partly on His character and miracles, partly on Old Testament prophecy, but mainly on His resurrection. In the second Gospel, we are given the standard teaching, made familiar almost in the very words, which had been repeated over and over again to individual inquirers and to crowded congregations, concerning His sermons, His miracles, the outstanding details of His public ministry, His death, and the resurrection. These are the evidences that He was the Son of God. In the fourth Gospel, which we are plainly told was written to make us know that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, a different method is followed. It seems to be assumed that the readers will be acquainted with the story as told by the earlier Gospels. The writer sets forth a series of "signs," witnessed by himself, beginning with the testimony of John the Baptist to the Lamb of God, passing on to the miracle at Cana, including the conversations with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman concerning which he doubtless had private information, and finishing with fresh evidences of the resurrection. He also includes long discourses, often controversial, in which our Lord plainly stated His divine origin.

These, then, were the evidences from which the first hearers of the message were asked to believe on Jesus as Christ the Lord, the divine Son of God. There was no need to use the virgin birth as an argument. We do not know when Mary began to make that story known. It was a private matter, not to be discussed with unbelievers who would merely scoff.

It is scarcely fair to say that the epistles ignore the virgin birth. Certainly, it is not categorically stated. That would be contrary to the policy of the first century preachers. Indeed, we should know very little of the details of our Lord's life if we had only the epistles. But both John's Gospel and the epistles contain sentences that may well refer to the virgin birth, though they cannot be adduced as proofs of it. John speaks of the Lord as the "only begotten of the Father," but also says, "When Jesus therefore saw His mother." Paul writes to the Galatians, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman (R.V.)." These words may not convince us that John, and Paul, had the story as told by Luke and Matthew vividly in mind when they wrote, but they are just what they might have written if they knew the story, as of course they did, but were not pressing it at the moment.

There are two slight allusions in John's writings which read strangely, if we toy with the notion that he did not know of the virgin birth. He mentions that the Jews brought it up as an argument that Jesus could not be the Christ, because He was not born at Bethlehem (John 7:42); he does not trouble to refute this contention, evidently because he knew that his readers would know the answer. In the Apocalypse, the dragon seeks to devour the Man Child as soon as He is born, which seems a plain reference to the massacre of the Innocents. Although it is believers who are spoken of as being born, not of the will of man but of God (John 1:13), there may perhaps be an occult reference to the birth of Christ as well.

The great multitude of Jews who became obedient to the faith, and the Gentile converts in towns all round the Roman empire, would as time went on become more and more interested to learn all that was possible about their Lord, and they would be particularly anxious to know how He came into the world, and how He went away from it. Strangely little is told in the New Testament about the Ascension, except by Luke. So, in the fullness of time, to those already sure both of His deity and His humanity, the secret of His birth was revealed. How could such a Person have come into the world at all? If he had no human mother, how could He be the Son of Man? If He had a human father, how could He be the only begotten Son of God?

When we approach the matter in this, the historical, the apostolic, way, it is much easier to give respectful heed to what the first and third evangelists have to tell us. To their accounts we may now turn. We notice immediately that though Matthew and Luke are at one in bearing witness to the main essentials, that the Lord had no human father, that His mother was a virgin, that He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, yet the narratives are utterly different in detail. This is not to say that they are contradictory.

In the nature of things, there were only two persons in the world who could know all the facts, Joseph and Mary. In Matthew's Gospel, we are given Joseph's version. We fully recognize that it is an inspired book, but Luke tells us that he "traced the course of all things accurately from the first" (so the English R.V.), and there is reason to believe that this would be true of the other writers of the historical books of the Bible. There is nothing in Matthew about the annunciation, or the visit to Elizabeth. There is much about Joseph's dreams, and thoughts, and intentions. He was minded to put her away privily, but was diverted from his purpose by an angel in a dream. To him the name to be given the child was revealed. To him, brokenhearted

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EDITORIALS

CHRISTMAS

Almost all of us realize that Christ was not born late in December; there were never shepherds watching in the fields by night at that time of the year in Palestine. We also know that the word Christmas means the mass in celebration of Christ. Originally wild orgies with drunkenness and revelry were celebrated two or three days after the shortest day of the year, in honor of Dionysus, god of wine. The Romans identified him with Bacchus, and in the second century B.C., the wild feasts were introduced into Italy. They led to such excesses that they were officially banned by decree of the Senate in 186 B.C. They lingered on in the private practices of many individuals, until they became rather general again in the early centuries of the Christian era. In the north countries a similar feast was celebrated by the pagans under the name of Yule. The earliest use of the word "Christmas" that has come down to us is that found in an Old English Chronicle of 1123.

The pagans in the German forests burned a log at Yule time, and decorated a tree. This practice became common in Germany and is first mentioned in the English language in 1789. The use of Christmas trees was not a custom in England until Queen Victoria married a German prince. About the same time immigrants brought the practice to America. The first Christmas cards mentioned in history were sent in England about 1867.

The festivals were usually celebrated for twelve days, ending with the twelfth night merrymaking about the fifth of January. In the middle ages the sixth of December was dubbed St. Nicholas' Day, and this saint was the patron of scholars, especially of school-boys. On the evening before his day the boys elected a "bishop" to preside over their festivities. He was made fat with a stuffed pillow, and given false whiskers. Only in America is he known as Santa Claus, and that name was given him by Longfellow in 1828.

Hardly a year goes by that I do not receive a letter from some anxious soul desiring to know if Christians may celebrate Christmas in view of the etymology of the word and the history of the festival. I am sure that I know, perhaps better than some, all that was originally bound up in the deviltry of these short-days and long-nights festivals. But I am a practical man, and I know that there is a great possibility of associating in the minds of our children a time of very great joy and the idea of the coming of the Lord Jesus to the world. If we let them know as the season approaches that it is not an absolute birthday as is their own, but a day of remembrance, and if the children can be taught to thank Him for all their joy, then the day and the season can be used as a point of departure for a real witness. There is so much of sadness and sorrow in this world that if we can lighten it with a season of gladness, while being true to the message which is our witness, then by all means "eat the fat and drink the sweet and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared . . . neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10).

And perhaps, in it all, one person shall look up from a very sad world and sing for the first time from the heart:

Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room
And Heaven and nature sing.

NO SPARK

A friend, a woman who was saved at the beginning of middle life, has grown very rapidly in spiritual things. She began teaching a Sunday School class in the church which she joined, and gave herself to her work in such a way that she soon possessed large spiritual knowledge, and what is more important, spiritual discernment.

Her denomination spent huge sums on developing new Sunday School material. From the point of view of psychologists and pedagogues it had all the modern improvements. In fact, it had everything but the Lord Jesus Christ. Recently this woman took the entire material of this curriculum for a three month period—a score of publications—and went through it all, marking it carefully, and then handing it over to me. I was delighted to see the spiritual discernment displayed by her comments. Clipped to one of the books was a brief paragraph from a newspaper, quoting the organizational head of her denomination as saying that the church of today lacked inspiration, that it was "A new and well-engineered model just off the production line with a tank full of high octane gasoline—but no spark." My correspondent had written on the margin of the clipping, "Describes the curriculum perfectly."

I was very much interested in a magnificently printed reader with children's stories—evidently for ten-year olds as the hero and heroine are fourth graders. If I had space, I would let you laugh at the whole ridiculous nonsense of the set-up. Jack, our hero, is winning little Butch, the ragamuffin who is always in trouble and Jack is doing it by being an insufferable little prig. But here is one of the stories: Jack had been trying for weeks to get Butch to visit him. Finally, he lured him with the bait of seeing his model airplanes which his older brother, a pilot, had helped him make. When Butch comes in he takes off his old coat, a misfit handed down from his father, of which he is ashamed, throws it in a corner, refusing the hanger which is offered him by our hero. He also refuses the clean towel which our hero offers him, as, of course, Jack has gone straight to the bathroom to wash. Butch is starting for the front door (I felt the same way myself), when Jack gets him to shift to his room by reminding him of a jet-plane model. Jack's mother comes in, all sweetness and light, and puts out her hand to Butch, with warm welcome and a promise of chocolate cake in the kitchen. Butch puts his fist out in a ball, afraid that the mother will see his hands are dirty, and immediately afterwards sneaks off to the bathroom and washes his hands.

That is the whole chapter, if you please. If I had children like Jack in my church, I would want their parents to take them to a psychiatrist. But this story is put forth to illustrate the text "Love is not rude." Before the book is over Jack, the little prig, has transformed Butch into a little do-

gooder who is standing between eighth grade bullies and a little Mexican (the race angle and brotherhood, you see). They both will probably go to a summer conference, hear a challenge by a Board secretary, go to a church school where they will get innoculated with a religion that will keep them from catching Biblical Christianity, and will turn out to be Board secretaries writing Sunday School material for the next generation.

First Corinthians thirteen is geometry that demands the pre-requisite of simple arithmetic. You cannot have the love that God is talking about by smearing it on in the style of Mrs. Eddy and Science and Health as with Jack and Butch. The love of which the Holy Spirit speaks is the released life of the Lord Jesus Christ who has come to dwell in the hearts of those who are born again through faith in the blood of Jesus Christ. And don't try to say that children don't understand the doctrine of sin, and the vicarious substitutionary satisfaction provided by the death of Christ. They do understand, and when they have understood they will produce a true love of Christ that will give them reality. And they will not necessarily hang their coats on hangers and rush to wash their hands upon entering the house.

DANGER SIGNALS

The denomination of which I am a member (Presbyterian, U.S.A.) publishes a little weekly paper, 16 pages, 5 x 7 inches, which it calls *Monday Morning*, and which is mailed to arrive in the Monday mail of all its ministers. I had often heard of preacher's blue Monday, but I had never experienced such a Monday until this paper began to reach my desk. Most of the blue moments I have known since then have come in lamentation over the growing apostasy in my denomination.

The present issue (Sept. 25, 1950) is an outstanding example. The first article (with the exception of an obituary) is entitled, "A Protestant Mass—Concluded," and this installment begins with, "As the preaching and teaching services in our Protestant churches lose more and more of their power to attract people, we shall turn more and more to ritual and pageantry. We are aware already of the pull of such ritual even in our lodges and secret organizations. Shall we deprive the church of the free use of any power to attract men to Christ?"

Now let's name that deviltry by its proper name. A man that would write such stuff should be hurled from the ministry of a Protestant church. The editors of a paper that would publish such stuff should be howled from their desks and branded as false to their trust. Let us rewrite the Gospels, and make Jesus Christ say instead of John 12:32, "And I, if I be gently discarded by men who should have been My ministers, will draw some men to Myself by ritual and pageantry." The fact is that ritual and pageantry can never enter a church where Jesus Christ is being exalted and where people are comprehending the fact that God is seeking true worshipers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

Another leading article in the sheet is entitled, "I Wear a Clerical Collar." I would suggest as titles for future articles: "The Art of Genuflection," "On the Reservation of the Sacrament," "Extreme Unction for Protestants," and "Art Forms for Presbyterian Madonnas." If they want an article from me, I will contribute one entitled, "A Pugatory for Derelict Divines."

In Edinburgh, cradle of Presbyterianism, they show the spot in one of the famed churches, where a woman, "Meg," hurled a stool at a bishop and cried out, "No Popery." I would be glad to furnish a few stools.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

I do not know how many of you are reading the daily devotions which I am writing for each day of the month, or how much joy you are getting out of the reading. But I am willing to venture that no one is getting as much joy out of the reading as I am out of the writing.

When we began *Eternity* I could not get the writer that I desired to do these paragraphs, so I started to do them myself, thinking that it would be for a month or two at the most. But then I got really interested. Now, when I came home from Europe recently, and had so much work on hand that I was toiling sixteen hours a day, my assistants suggested that I get someone else to do the daily devotions, but I was having too much joy in writing the paragraphs.

One of our ministerial subscribers has written in to say that he could not imagine getting so much devotional meat out of the passages, and that he was finding it possible to take about a week's supply of the paragraphs and make up his mid-week prayer meeting meditation. I was overjoyed, but am answering him that I am finding more than I even put down.

For example in going back over the material to look for a point, I noticed that I had failed to comment on something that was of particular blessing to me long after I had passed over it and written the paragraphs. Here for instance, is a paragraph that could have fitted in between our meditation for October 26th and that for the next day:

AND ABRAHAM JOURNEYED (12:9)

In the next verse we shall see that his ultimate destination was Egypt; but what was his point of departure? If we look back, we shall see that he left Bethel, which means *the house of God,* and in so traveling he left his altar, his place of worship. Here was the root cause of all the evils that followed. If he soon landed in Egypt, in the midst of lying, compromise, disobedience and dishonor, it was because he had left the altar and the place of his worship. The Ephesian church got out of the will of God by leaving its first love (Rev. 2:4). Any believer who is in the Egypt of bondage today can know that he is there because he has left his Bethel.

LORD, MAY WE BE WILLING TO STAY WHERE WE BELONG.

Perhaps you have not been following these daily meditations. Remember that they are not meant to be the whole of your devotions, but merely the percussion cap that shall set off the true force of your devotion.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many readers appreciate more and more the blessings received in giving a subscription to ETERNITY for Christmas. This year we are expecting a large number of orders and would appreciate your sending your order early so that it may be cared for before the proverbial Christmas rush. We will send the Christmas card to you for mailing, or mail it ourselves if you prefer. A subscription to ETERNITY is a most acceptable gift and a constant reminder throughout the year of your thoughtfulness.

That Ye May Know

By Ralph L. Keiper

In our last several studies covering the previous section of the epistle to the Ephesians (1:3-14), we have seen how each Person of the Godhead has made salvation possible for us. We have followed the Father in His plan of salvation's strategy; we have observed how the Son made salvation possible through His redemption; many of us have experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in the taking of God's Word and by its use calling us from death unto life eternal. We have noted that we have been saved to be more than sinners saved by grace. We have learned that we are to be sons, "holy and without blame, redeemed, forgiven." In short, we have been told that we may have Heaven now.

The great problem that we face as believers is this: "How can we translate into daily experience what God has done for us?" It is this anticipated question which gives rise to the apostle's prayer as we have it in the section before us (1:15-23). The burden of his petition is that we may experience what we know to be true. Our faith is not to be academic. It is to be dynamic. It is not merely to occupy the mind. It is to live within the heart.

The apostle prays that we may know three things: who is the hope of His calling; who is the glory of His inheritance; and what is the greatness of His power to us (1:18, 19). He prays that we might have the wisdom and revelation to know these things.

With a note of thanksgiving Paul begins his prayer: "On this account, I also, having heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers (1:15, 16). He is thankful because the saints at Ephesus are allowing their position to affect their experience. They manifest their faith in God by their love to the brethren. This causes the apostle to rejoice. And because of their conduct he can with thanksgiving remember them before the throne of grace. He does not pray for them carelessly, but, he says, "I continually make mention of you—I call you to mind upon my prayers." "Upon my prayers" may seem odd to us but the phrase suggests that for the missionary apostle prayer was a commerce in which the burdens of the saints were sent to God, and the prayers which the apostle offered were the carriers, bearing the believers' burdens to God's great heart. The return trip brought blessings from the heart of God to those for whom the apostle was praying. This is real prayer. Paul knew that God would answer, having proved Him o'er and o'er.

And what was the purpose of the apostle's prayer? He prays: "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, might give to you the spirit of wisdom and unveiling in the full knowledge of Him . . ." (1:17). We have been saved, we are redeemed. God has done it! Now there is something for us to do. We must learn to know Him. Paul's prayer takes us back to the words of our Lord when He said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me." "Learn" is from the Greek word *manthano* from which we have the English word "mathematics." Literally our Lord is saying, "figure Me out!" His great apostle would have us "figure Him out."

Paul prays that you and I may have given us a spirit that will do for us two things; make us wise, and give us eyes to see. A person can never be a scholar if he has not the spirit of a student. A painter will never do a true work if he does not have the soul of an artist. We shall never know the fullness of our salvation if we do not have the spirit which makes us wise, and the spirit which makes us want to see Christ unfolded before us.

When you and I as believers came to be saved, we did not immediately reach the mountaintops of Christian knowledge; indeed, we discovered that we were just out of the depths of ignorance knowing that we had been delivered from eternal darkness. Now the apostle wants us to be wise and be in a place where Christ can be unfolded to us that we may know this great salvation in every part of our experience. The term "knowledge" of our verse has to do with the realm of our experience. Paul is praying that we may know in the reality of life, the doctrine in which we believe. And the sphere of this thorough-going knowledge is to be Him. To know Him in our joys. To know Him in our sorrows. To know Him in our defeats. To know Him in our victories. To know Him in life. To know Him in death. To know Him thoroughly in experience. This is the cry of the apostle in our behalf. And reader, this is just what we do need.

Can we know Him? The apostle prays on: "Having had the eyes of your heart enlightened, for the purpose that you might know, what is the hope of His calling, what the wealth of glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe. (1:18, 19). In other words, Paul prays, "You can be-

hold Him now for your eyes have been enlightened. Your heart is ready to receive Him. The cataracts of sin have been lifted from the eyes of your heart. That you may learn to use your new sight is my plea."

A close examination of this three-fold purpose will disclose a three-fold manner in which our spiritual lives will be affected. When we fully appreciate the hope of our calling, we shall know that our future is secure; when we fully realize the stake which God now has in each believer, we shall rejoice in our security; when we fully contemplate "His power to us-ward," we shall exchange our weakness for His strength. These are the ingredients which make it possible for us to fully know Him.

"The hope of our calling;" what is it? If we remember what we were out of Christ, we can then appreciate what our hope is in Christ. ". . . At that time, ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (2:12). "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and aliens, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (2:19). There was a time when we were spiritual orphans—orphans in the storm of sin. No one wanted us. We were without hope. Even to God we were strangers. But now, we need be no longer. You, believer, have been redeemed that you may have a Father, indeed, the Father in Heaven. Why live as an orphan? Believer, you, being God's elect child, are personally watched over by Him. Why live as an alien? You, believer, have been invited by the Spirit to come home, not to live as a boarder, but as a member of the household. Why don't you? You know the truth! Why don't you move into it? Paul is praying that you will.

We must fully come to know not only "the hope of our calling" but "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." It is true that we have an inheritance with the Father. But that is not in view here. What is in view here is the Father's inheritance in us. And what is it in us that He so prizes? The riches of His glory? And what is this glory? It is the Lord Jesus Himself. In the Person of the Spirit He has come to make His home in our hearts. The Glory who dwelt in the tabernacle, and then in the Temple, and then in the flesh, has come to dwell with us through His Spirit. What riches! Our Christian faith is not an ethic to be practiced; our Christian faith is a fellowship to be entered. Oh, the privilege of the Glory.

What a wonderful change in my life
has been wrought,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
I have light in my soul for which
long I had sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

I'm possessed of a hope that is steadfast and sure,
Since Jesus came into my heart,
And no dark clouds of doubt now
my pathway obscure,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

I shall go there to dwell in that city
I know,
Since Jesus came into my heart;
And I'm happy, so happy as onward
I go,
Since Jesus came into my heart.

Are you happy in your hope? Are you possessed by it? Have you experienced its cleansing change? The apostle prays that you should thoroughly know Him. But you cry in anguish, "I am weak! I am defeated! My burdens are grievous! My circumstances are such that. . .that. . .that. . ." ". . .that you cannot trust the Lord!" Face it! Admit it! Be ashamed of it! Then study the third element in this wonderful prayer.

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the working of the might of His strength, which He threw into operation in Christ when He raised Him from among the dead, and set Him down at His right hand in the Heavenlies" (1:19, 20).

Is your weakness greater than death? Are your burdens greater than the tomb? Of course not! And if they were, look at the power and might of His strength which is at our disposal. The power than can make strong; the might that can empty a tomb. This power we are to fully know, here and now. If not, why be saved? God did not give to us a salvation adequate only for our needs at death! He gave us a salvation which is adequate for us now.

Paul, in this marvelous petition, expands the explanation of this mighty power to show us its force in resurrection, its place in exaltation, and its right to dominion. From death to life; from the grave to the throne; thus in Christ, God's power worked. On the throne, at God's right hand, is our blessed Lord, in the place of power for us. AND WE ARE IN HIM! But the reason we are not on the throne with Him is that we will not go to the tomb with Him. God will not put His might at our disposal if we continually insist upon relying on weakness.

Why was our Lord exalted to such a high estate? Because the position was His by right, He being God? Yes! Was He exalted because of His humiliation? Yes! But for far more than these. He was exalted that He might be our Head, and that we might be His body. As the Head, He directs us; as the Head, He strengthens us; as the Head, He nourishes us; that we, His body, might live for Him. Do you not see the matchless grace in this? Do you not see what you are missing, carnal Christian? Do you not see, unbelieving believer, contradictory though you are, that you are without excuse, living in poverty when you should be living in riches—the riches of His glory—in the power of His might.

In Christ, we are not considered merely saved sinners, we are treated as risen sons by God, our Father. Why do we insist on living as sinners when

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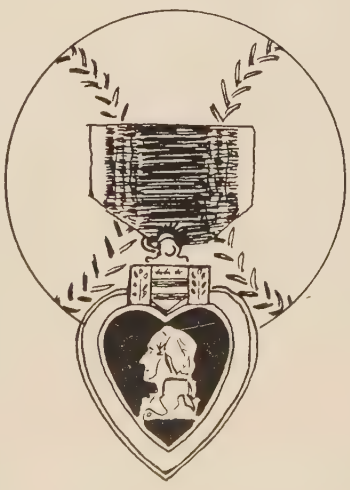
When the first war wounded from Korea arrived in San Francisco aboard a plane a small army of reporters nd photographers turned out to meet them. A corporal from Oakland was seated in a wheel chair. He gave them a beautiful story of being knocked over by the concussion from artillery shot. Only one reporter took the trouble to check his story and discovered that in reality he had broken his ankle while sliding into second base in a baseball game in Japan and had never been in Korea.



There are a great many men who do a lot of boasting in Christian work and get the headlines here on earth. But when the Lord comes He will bring to light all the hidden things of darkness. Then the big mouths, if they have been saved, will have lost their reward because they took the bows here on earth.

TOMORROW

Current Events in the Light of the Bible

Behind Closed Doors
Shafts of Light from China

"Then came Jesus, the doors being shut." This word from the upper room in Jerusalem after the resurrection, might well be a text to go over an account of the acts of the Lord in China today. Behind the Communist barriers the Holy Spirit is working, and there are amazing reports of the power of the Gospel in that greatest of all populations in spite of the many difficulties.

Who would think that the believers could have free radio time in Shanghai by popular demand! Who would think of an edition of a million copies of the Gospels and Acts being printed and circulated freely! Who would think of bales of tracts, literally by the ton, being carried to all parts of China by the parcel post of the government, and the native Christians being encouraged by pastoral epistles that strengthen the remote churches and bring replies that tell of pre-eminent blessing!

Modern scientists have been able to shine beams of light into the remote recesses of the structure of iron and steel. God is permitting that shafts of light from interior China should come through the iron which has been erected around so much of the world, to encourage us today by the knowledge that God is still the same yesterday, forever, and *today*. A missionary prayer letter contains the following paragraph: "The past has not exhausted the possibilities nor the domain for doing great things for God. The church that is dependent on its past history for its miracles of power and grace is a fallen church. . . The greatest benefactor this age could have is the man who will bring the teachers and the church back to prayer."

Before the war, I was taken one day into the offices of the China Inland Mission in Shanghai. When their fine, modern buildings were built in Sinza Road, the old buildings, down in the center of the city, which had been sold advantageously to the advancing claims of big business, were torn down; but the furnishings used by Hudson Taylor in his private office, were removed to the new building and placed as he had used them. Above the desk which had been used by this great man of God, there was a motto on the wall from which he had often drawn strength. There were three verses together, as follows:

The sun stood still. . .
The iron did swim. . .
This God is our God. . .

It will not be necessary to dwell much upon the difficulties of getting the Gospel out in the midst of a pagan land. The fact that the difficulties have been complicated by the coming of a well-trained Soviet leadership merely serves as the background to reveal, more wonderfully, what God is doing in China today. We have pointed out on many occasions that if you want to see the power of God, the atmosphere must be one of great difficulty, while if you want to see the miracle power of God, the atmosphere must be one of impossibility. The enemy of souls has put the murk of Communist ideology down into the minds of heathendom, and has now changed difficulty into impossibility in China. It would seem that our Lord loves to work under such circumstances, and there is every evidence that He is doing so.

From metropolitan Shanghai all the way to China's far west in Sinkiang province come stories of great blessing. Shanghai, one of the great cities of the world, larger than Chicago, has been the scene of great revival during the past months. The church in Nanyang Road has recently completed special evangelistic services and more than fifteen hundred people handed in their names as inquirers after the truth. When evangelistic meetings are held in America the inquirers are mostly people who have been brought up within the sound of church bells, and who have an ancestry that includes men and women of faith for several generations. In China the people and their ancestors have been Devil worshipers, and each convert represents an upheaval in mentality and a transformation in ways of living unknown to the western world. Each of these inquirers is being visited and many are being brought on to the first steps in the Christian life.

So many people are attending churches that everywhere one hears of crowded auditoriums, repeat services, and make-shift meeting halls to accommodate the crowds. In Shanghai a large cigarette warehouse has been taken over for church services, and in another part of the city a dance hall is being used to accommodate those who wish to listen to the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The church of Jesus Christ in China is flourishing, and there are many brave stories of men and women who are standing up to be counted for Christ who have never been willing to be thus named before. This time, too, there can be no sneering stories against the motives of their conversion. "Rice Christians" was an epithet that was hurled against the Christians eighty years ago; and when the Boxer uprising came, it was seen that many of those who had been ridiculed as converts for a bowl of rice were willing to die for their new found faith. At the present

time it is impossible to accuse the new adherents of conversion for the sake of favors. The moment a man is baptized he is marked as a Christian, and is, of course, in more danger from the Communists than a man who is a pagan. The Reds know, naturally, that a man of strong Christian faith can never fall before the blandishments of the Russian regime. For a man to be willing to take the step of baptism is an act of courage, as it is notification to all that he has asked of his own free will to be counted with those who belong to Christ. And there are many who are willing thus to be counted.

One of the most astounding stories has come to light in connection with the new census that is being taken. Down in Chekiang province, birthplace of communism in China, a guest passed through an inn, and by the providence of God, left a book behind him, lying on a shelf. The innkeeper's daughter went in to clean the room and knocked the book off the shelf. Picking it up she took it to her father, saying, "Some student has left a book behind. It may be a dictionary." The father opened the book and began to read, "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth. . ." The Book was the Bible.

The inn-keeper began to read the book and read till the end of daylight. His wife called him to come to bed, but he put some oil in a saucer and twisted some threads for a wick and read throughout the night. He read the book through and began to tell the stories to all who came to his inn. After some weeks he went into a city and saw a sign in front of a building that said, "Jesus Hall." He knew that his book talked about Jesus and he went boldly in and asked for information. It was not long before he was enrolled as an inquirer, and was soon led to Christ and baptized. A Buddhist priest came to the inn, and the host led the guest to Christ. The Buddhist priest said, "The thing that impressed me was that this man's God is alive. All our gods are dead. But this man's God is the living God." Still dressed in his priest's garb, the former Buddhist began to give out tracts. He went to the railroad station and distributed tracts to those in the trains as they passed through. He told the story of Christ everywhere in his neighborhood.

When the Communist officials came to the town they approached the missionary home and asked for the records of the church. The building had been destroyed in the Japanese war, and had been rebuilt just before the Communists arrived. The records had been destroyed also. They told the officials, however, that they would make every effort to have the records in a few days. The census-takers had made it necessary for every house to put up a card with the names of the inhabitants, their ages, their religion, and other details. The local pastor began to go around from house to house, and to his amazement he discovered that hundreds of people had listed themselves as Christians. When he began to enroll them for instruction he discovered that many had come to faith in Christ through the testimony of the innkeeper and the former Buddhist priest.

The Bible which had been left behind by the traveler reminds me of another story that has just been printed in England. The British and Foreign Bible Society had a mistake in their shipping room and sent fifty Portuguese Bibles out to Hong Kong, China, to the mission home of Mrs. Lechmere Clift, well-known to Christians who have passed through Hong Kong. At the same time there arrived in Hong Kong a retired Baptist missionary who had spent much of his life among Portuguese people and who spoke their language. Again, at the same time, the Portuguese government brought a regiment of black soldiers from Portuguese Angola in Africa, to garrison the island of Macao, near Hong Kong. The Baptist missionary began to work with the Angolese; many of them were saved. Twenty have recently been baptized, and the British and Foreign Bible Society has had a regular order for Bibles in Portuguese. None were available, but fifty New Testaments have been shipped there.

I have had access to scores of paragraphs from letters that have come from all over China. Look over my shoulder for a few moments and read some of these stories. These are all stories that are up-to-date, having been written as recently as the end of summer and the beginning of autumn.

From Chekiang province. "Pastor Wang returned from a five weeks' country trip. He was much encouraged to see the number of new believers in the outstations he visited. He had about 150 baptisms, and estimates the total at 300 for this year, more than ever before. Two new churches were opened last month and another is being built now. Two others say they cannot accommodate their growing congregations. Last week our twenty paid workers were in for their quarterly meetings. All are still able to give full time to their church work. They went away with new supplies of tracts, posters, and Gospels. These are truly days of opportunity for our Chinese workers."

Also from Chekiang province. "Several preachers told of having visits from the new regime asking them if they are in any way connected with the foreigners, and where they get their money from, etc. One was told not to have such coming and going with us. One of the evangelists had been preaching on 'Sin and Judgment' and made a remark that angered some of the crowd, and he was put in prison for the night, but was released next day. He said he prayed and sang all night. Our schools have reopened. Almost 500 have enrolled in the city."

Again from Chekiang province. "The Property Committee with members of the council (all Chinese, as the mission properties are being handed over to committees of Christians) met here, and we talked over the matter of transferring Mission property. While they were unanimous in the vote to accept and take over the property, they expressed deep regret for the reason for having to do so. There was not the slightest hint of wanting to be rid of the foreigner, or wanting to know what the Mission was going to do to help financially."

It would appear that only those who are most ignorant of missions have the ridiculous idea that the missionaries are agents of foreign imperialism. There are letters which indicate that some sensible Communist leaders know, indeed, that the missionaries are in China for Christ and not for the United States or England.

This is illustrated by a letter from Anwehi province. "Dr. F. has been able to develop a useful and busy clinic at B . . . Street. He is doing a fine work, and the people are grateful for his care of their sick. We get quite a number of soldiers and officers at the daily clinic. More would come if the doctor had time to deal with them. This work undoubtedly accounts in a measure for the friendly attitude of the people, and the soldiers and officers greet us with friendly nods, especially if they have been patients."

From Yunnan province in the southwest: "The blessing of the Lord continues. Souls are being saved on every hand. When I returned to the valley this time I heard of

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GOD IN CHRIST

"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."—
2 Corinthians 5:19

By G. Campbell Morgan

The hour of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth was that in which the Light that lighteth every man came into the world. To describe the event in terms which suggest its value in the economy of God, I should be inclined to speak of it as the last crisis in the divine procedure. By *last* I do not mean to suggest that there will be no other, but rather that there has been none since.

Every student of the Bible will recognize that God's methods with man have ever been those of process and of crisis. Long periods of preparation have led up to some moment when, by a new and independent activity on His part, a new departure in human history has been made.

Without staying to argue that at any length we must recognize, if we read the Scriptures carefully, that this has been the method of God in all human history and in all creation. Just as in the poetry and accuracy of the first chapters in our Bible we see some divine act that we cannot perfectly understand, leading on to processes which we can follow, until we reach another crisis, when there is another act full of mystery followed by succeeding processes, so not only in creation, but also through all God's dealings with men, this process is discoverable. And so far as Scripture has revealed anything of the future, it clearly leads us to expect that the next crisis will be that of the second advent of our Lord. Today we are living in that period of process which lies between the last crisis, that of the first advent, and the next crisis, that of the second advent.

If I were asked for the briefest declaration of Scripture, setting forth the meaning of the Christian economy, including these advents and all that lies between them, both as to its method and its purpose, I should not hesitate to quote this text: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself."

While not dealing in detail with the mystery of the method of the first advent, while not describing in detail the processes of the life of Jesus, while not describing in detail the processes of the years multiplying themselves into centuries, and the centuries into millenniums following that advent, and while not dealing in detail with the mystery of the method of the second advent, it gathers the whole fact into one brief and comprehensive declaration, "God was in Christ"—that is the method; "reconciling the world unto Himself"—that is the purpose.

Our purpose in this meditation is to dwell upon the method, referring only to that purpose of reconciliation so far as is necessary for our interpretation and full understanding of the method.

"God was in Christ." That is the initial and supreme wonder of our holy religion. I am anxious, as I may be able by the Spirit of God, to lead you a little beyond the first and simplest things, to the profounder sublimities of the first advent. We speak of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, and that alone is a wonderful story. But I am anxious that we should recognize that in the birth of Jesus of Nazareth there was something far more wonderful than the birth of a man, far more remarkable than the coming into human life of another human being. That assuredly did happen, infinite though the mystery may be, and for evermore transcending our comprehension of how He was human, and yet more. Nevertheless, the fact abides that the birth of Jesus was much more than the birth of a man.

While our eyes are fixed in meditation, and in adoration, upon the child held in His mother's arms in helplessness, having gold, and frankincense, and myrrh offered to Him by the Persian Magi, which He at the moment, in His simple humanity, did not understand the value of, yet let us recognize that we are gazing upon One in whom God is beginning a new movement and a new method. Our eyes are allowed to rest for a moment in imagination upon the Person of a little child, of whom the deepest and profoundest truth is declared in the words of my text, "God was in Christ."

Let us first think of a preliminary matter. What was the position of the world without that Christ? What did men know of God, or what could they know of Him apart from Christ? Secondly, we will turn to the more positive consideration of the declaration, "God was in Christ." Finally, in one word of application, we will consider the declared purpose of the mystery, "reconciling the world unto Himself."

Our first consideration then, which is preliminary, and of the nature of background to the foreground of consideration, is that of human thought about God, apart from Christ. Theologians have told us that man's thoughts of God are necessarily anthropomorphic. May I put that into another sentence? Man's thoughts of God are necessarily the result of man's consciousness of himself. Man does—and now I use the word "man" in its generic and broadest sense—man does think of God; and, thinking of God, he does so upon the basis of his own personality and consciousness. There can be no escape from this; man can only argue of God from what he is in himself, and every idea of Deity that possesses the mind of men—and will you allow that word "possesses" now to be a perpetually present tense, having application to past and present conceptions?—results from this one line of activity. Man projects into immensity the fact of his own personality, and calls the result God. I do not care for the moment whether you think of the most depraved or degraded form of religion, using the terms of our usual speech, or whether you think of your own religion; the same thing is true.

All our conceptions of God, to go back to the word of the theologians, are anthropomorphic. I am not speaking

This sermon was preached by Dr. Morgan in Westminster Chapel, London, and appeared in print in England serially under the general title "The Westminster Pulpit." It is reprinted here by arrangement with the trustees of his estate.

of that which is external, and physical, and material, and unimportant—transient, and therefore not important, and only in that sense unimportant. I am speaking of man in the essential facts of his personality. And man does necessarily take these essential facts, when he thinks of another Being, and project them into immensity. His conception of that other Being, greater than himself, is that, nevertheless of his own nature, it is created on the pattern of his own personality.

Think of the essentials of human life, and I am going to take the very simplest—the essentials of which every child is conscious. The first word of human consciousness is "I am," and when that word of human consciousness is analyzed, these are the terms of its expression: "I know," that is mind; "I will," that is choice; "I can," that is force. These are the simplest things of human consciousness. Man takes these ideas of experience, and projects them into immensity, and so constructs his idea of God. Mind, infinite knowledge; will, supreme choice and consequent government; force, absolute ability. These things underlie all streams of religious thinking. Wherever religion has placed at its center personality as Deity, it has been because man has taken of himself, and has imagined something of the same pattern, the same nature, the same kind, but vaster, greater.

Now mark what man has been doing. In every case, apart from Christ and apart from His ministry, man has projected himself into immensity, and consequently he has projected into immensity all that is in himself. In every case, therefore, there has been an amplification of failure. Self-centered life flung out into immensity postulates a self-centered God. All the things of human limitation, resulting from human sin, abide in human conceptions of God, apart from that which has come into the world through Christ. An enlarged conception of mind, an enlarged conception of knowledge, based upon man's own consciousness of knowledge, which is limited, creates an imperfect conception of knowledge. Man has never come, apart from Christ, to a consciousness of full and final and perfect knowledge in God, and consequently man persists in his attempts to deceive God, and when man attempts to deceive God, he does by that very action reveal the fact that he does not believe that God knows all and perfectly.

The whole system of sacrificial worship in other religions is that of attempting to persuade God to change His mind, and alter the method of His procedure.

Or if man thinks of will, his will is capricious and revengeful, and he flings that out into immensity, and his conception of God is upon the pattern of what he is in himself.

Consequently in all religions other than the Christian, through all the ages, the deities postulated are grotesque representations of humanity. The underlying ideals revealed in the deities referred to in the Old Testament—Moloch, Baal, and Mammon—continue this statement; the deification of the emotional in Moloch, of the intellectual in Baal, of force and power in Mammon. In every case at the back is a human being, and the monster that is worshiped is but the projection into infinity of the failure of the human being.

The gods of ancient Greece and Rome, or the gods men worship today—sensuous gods, vindictive gods, lazy gods, trivial gods—prove the same truth. We only know these things because we see them in another light. We see these gods by comparison with the one God who has been revealed to us.

But when, apart from revelation, man seeks a deity he evolves his conception of deity from himself; he must think of that being upon the pattern of what he is in himself. And so, to make the illustration simple, given a man trying to think of God, he thinks of himself, and then of someone as himself, but vaster; but the things he sees in himself, his evil as well as his good, the wrong as well as the right, the meanness as well as the nobility, are all present in his god, and the visions of men apart from the Christian religion are filled with deities, grotesque and enlarged limitations of man in his failure and in his sin.

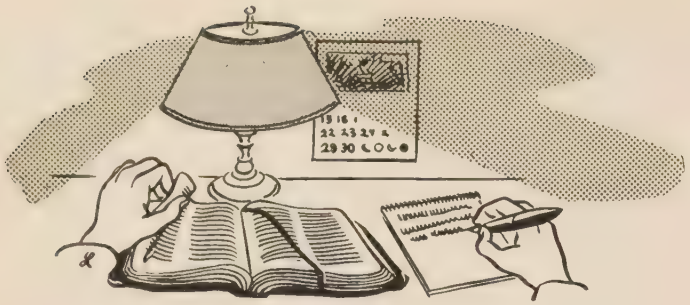
My youngest friend will allow me a simple illustration, and the older ones will be patient. You have but to think of a magic lantern. Here you have a small picture, and you look at it, and on it is the figure of a man. You put it in the lens, and away yonder on the screen is the same man, magnified. But it is the same man, it is the same picture, and if here in the lens the picture be that of a man twisted and distorted and grotesque, the picture there on the sheet is twisted and distorted and grotesque. That is exactly what men have done in their creation of gods. Take all the gods of the heathen world and trace the lines, and you will find they are focused in the men who imagined them.

But you tell me we have grown away from these ideas; you tell me there are a great many men in the world today who do not claim to be Christian, who yet have a wonderfully true and accurate idea of God, of His uprightness, and beneficence, and tenderness, and holiness; you tell me there are men who will not accept the Christian doctrine of incarnation, who yet have a beautiful ideal of God. I know it, but whence came it? Every advance in man's conceptions of deity is Christian, even though the men who hold the new and higher view do not name themselves Christian.

(*Continued on page 35*)

When the Empress of Ireland sank in the St. Lawrence River on May 29, 1914, the amount of money and jewels that the heirs of the victims claimed had been deposited in the purser's safe was so large that the insurers went to the expense of having it salvaged. When opened, the safe contained less than five per cent of the alleged loss.

There is going to come a day when the books of God will be opened and the dead shall be judged according to that which is written in the heavenly books. There are those who today make extravagant claims of faith that will find in that day that their lies have been brought to light. Saving faith is a deposit that must be demonstrated by daily dividends of faithful living.



DAILY MEDITATIONS

in the book of

GENESIS

DONALD GREY BARNHOUSE

December 1

AMRAPHEL (14:1)

You may wonder how the name of an ancient king can be the subject of a daily meditation, but we know that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable" (2 Tim. 3:16); and that "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). The critics of the Bible laughed at the fourteenth chapter of Genesis for years. If you go to the dusty cellars of our great libraries and find the volumes of the editions of the encyclopedias of 75 years ago they will tell you that Amraphel never existed. This chapter was a "proof" against inspiration. And then the positive identification of Amraphel and Hammurabi was made, the code of laws which he set forth was discovered and the chapter was proven historical, and here the Devil got a mouth full of dust.

LORD, WE THANK THEE FOR EVERY WORD.

December 2

THESE MADE WAR (14:2)

This is the first recorded war of all history. Wars come from the fallen state of man. They come from the lusts that war in the members of the human race (Jas. 4:1). Even the most peaceful nation must learn the art of war in order to repel those who would attack them. In this case it should be noted that the four kings in the first verse are of the line of Shem, while the five kings in the second verse are of the line of Ham. Lot had chosen Sodom, and was living among the accursed people. God is going to bring him out, even though it takes a war to do it. God will always order events to take care of His own, and to bring all His providential plans to fruition.

LORD, WE THANK THEE THAT THOU ART LORD OF HISTORY.

December 3

TWELVE YEARS THEY SERVED (14:4)

And they should have, for God has pronounced the curse of their servitude upon them when Noah announced their destiny to Ham and Canaan. There is much more here than meets the eye. The conflict is about to touch Abraham because of the fact that his nephew, Lot, is dwelling in the midst of the kings of Ham. Their warfare against those who had been put over them by God Himself is about to involve Abraham, in whom is the seed of the promise. There are three parties here: the world, the flesh and the man of faith. The latter will find that he must war against both, even while they are fighting between themselves.

LORD, GIVE US DISCERNMENT TO KNOW OUR ENEMIES.

December 4

REPHAIMS, ZUZIMS, EMIMS (14:5)

Careful study will show that these are the demon forces which produced giants in Noah's time and afterwards. It is interesting to note that the religious world (the four kings), fights against the irreligious world (the five kings), and overcomes it; but the man of faith must not be deceived by the victory. The religious world may slay certain giants and have waves of reform, but the net result is always the same. The carnal Christian (Lot) will always return to Sodom, and the spiritual man (Abraham) will have to stand against all, for he stands with God alone. The moral victory of the religious world must not be confused with the spiritual victory of the man of faith.

LORD, MAY WE STOP BEING RELIGIOUS, AND BECOME TRULY SPIRITUAL.

December 5

FOUR KINGS WITH FIVE (14:9)

Augustine says that *five* always refers to something connected with the senses, while *four* is the number of the world. He speaks of the five barley loaves, the five husbands of the woman of Samaria, the five brothers of the rich man, and other fives, all connected with the five senses. At times, though Sodom throw off the yoke, Babylon can always reimpose it. We must not think that Babylon is Israel, though God uses Babylon—for even the wicked are the sword of God (Psa. 17:13). The religious world, though religious, is still the world. For example, the Vatican Babylon, can war against the Hollywood Sodom, or the Moscow Sodom, but whichever side wins, the victor can not walk with God. Only an Abraham can do that.

LORD, MAY WE WALK IN THE PLACE OF COMMUNION.

December 6

LOT DWELT IN SODOM (14:12)

It should be noted that in the beginning Lot merely pitched his tent toward Sodom (13:12). Now we find him dwelling within the city. The lust of good land had taken him into the neighborhood of sin, and now the seductive power of the environment became too much for him. From the fellowship of Abraham, to a tent in the lush grass was only the first step. From the tent to the town was the second step. It was inevitable that the remaining steps should come, and we shall see them unfolding before us. There is only one way of victory and that is complete separation.

LORD, GIVE US THE COURAGE TO AMPUTATE.

December 7

AND THEY TOOK LOT (14:12)

The wars and rumors of wars between the four kings and the five kings left Abraham, dwelling at vision and communion (Mamre, Hebron), absolutely untroubled. But these things become of the deepest concern to Lot, because he was dwelling where he had no business to be. How often we find Christians who are deeply concerned about "movements" in the midst of the world, simply because they are living in the midst of the world. There is nothing sadder than a minister who is giving himself over to siding with moral issues in a civic fight when he should be occupied with spiritual issues in the eternal, invisible warfare. Lot will always be captured in such a warfare, simply because he is living in Sodom.

LORD, KEEP US ON HIGH GROUND, WHERE WE BELONG.

December 8

ONE TOLD ABRAHAM THE HEBREW (14:13)

It is the man who is truly separated unto God who has the real power to help. We may be sure, though the world would not wish to admit it, that the existence of groups of surrendered, praying Christians,

is of more importance to our land than the possession of the atomic bomb. The enemy may find bombs, but it cannot duplicate righteous men, whose effectual, fervent prayers avail much (Jas. 5:16). The word *Hebrew* comes from a root that means *passed over*. The Septuagint translates it *the passenger*. Abraham had passed over the river; he was separated from Ur of the Chaldees; he was separated from his kindred and from his father's house, even as the Lord had commanded him (12:1). Now he was in the position to prevail.

LORD, MAY WE LIVE IN THE PLACE OF PREVAILING POWER.

December 9

HE DWELT IN THE PLAIN OF MAMRE (14:13)

He did not move till his fellow-believer was in danger. The world wants to enlist the man of faith as an ally, but the true man of faith will not join Babylon in its efforts to subdue Sodom, nor will he join Sodom in its efforts to throw off the yoke of Babylon. Both sides will put up plausible arguments, but the man of faith has no place in the controversies, even moral controversies, that occupy much of the thought of the world. Babylon cannot understand that the true pilgrim will not join it in the fight on open evils; Christians like Lot will sometimes make common cause with the godless and the unclean, in order to attempt to break the yoke of Sodom. Abraham will dwell aloof, misunderstood by all but God.

LORD, MAY WE BE WILLING TO DWELL ALONE WITH THEE.

December 10

WHEN HE HEARD THAT HIS BROTHER WAS TAKEN (14:14)

The calm dignity of the man of faith is beautifully brought out here. He could have said, "It served him right"; or "He had it coming to him." But the man of God is a man of sympathy. He knows the inner meaning, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Mt. 7:1). Perhaps he remembered how he had been tempted to go to Egypt. He was a spiritual man and was restoring Lot in a spirit of meekness (Gal. 6:1). The yielded believer can not have within him a root of bitterness. There is nothing that marks a man as being like Christ more than the genuine love of some one who has been the cause of a deep wrong.

LORD, MAKE US TRULY UNSELFISH.

December 11

HE ARMED (14:14)

Only when a believer is enmeshed in the religious world does the pilgrim come down from the quiet hills of promise. Observe that Abraham did not fight the moral evil of Sodom—he prayed for the Sodomites. He does fight the religious evil of Babylon, for they have captured a believer. It is always thus. At the time of Christ our Lord pitied the publicans and harlots, and assailed and judged the Pharisees. The moral Pharisees called our Lord a glutton and a wine-bibber (Mt. 11:19), a friend of publicans and sinners. This was because the religious unsaved man can never understand the motives of the spiritual, born-again man. Wisdom is justified of her children.

LORD, MAY WE FIGHT IN THE RIGHT CAUSES.

December 12

TRAINED SERVANTS (14:14)

Fortunately Abraham was not a pacifist. He lived in the midst of wars and rumors of wars and thus he took the precaution to train his servants. We do not know how many more servants he had left at home with the cattle; but the 318 that were trained were now given arms, and the pursuit of the enemy into his own territory was undertaken. Abraham, as the previous chapter clearly shows, was a man of peace, and he is not moved by covetousness or ambition. The man of faith is a realist, and not a passive coward, or an incapable leader. When the crisis comes he draws new strength from God and pursues to the victory.

LORD, MAKE US REALISTS WITH THEE.

December 13

HE BROUGHT BACK ALL (14:16)

The preceding chapter shows us meek and lowly Abraham, yielding his rights to Lot. The present chapter shows us a courageous Abraham, a man of decision and great ability, displaying initiative, tenacity and capacity. How does a peaceful man suddenly develop great gifts, unsuspected in his life? The answer is that all his resources are in God. The Holy Spirit came upon some to give them the gift of fine needlework (Ex. 28:3); upon others to give them the gift of jewelry, masonry and wood-working (Ex. 31:3-5). He came upon Joseph with the Holy spirit of good administration (Gen. 41:38). Here we see Him giving Abraham the gift of generalship and with it the victory.

LORD, MAY WE REALIZE THAT THOU ART SUFFICIENT FOR ALL.

December 14

SODOM WENT OUT TO MEET HIM (14:17)

The world is not too much interested in praising the victory of a believer, but it is interested in getting back a little of the booty. Shakespeare tells us that "sweet are the uses of adversity"; but we may say that the uses of prosperity are revealing. Kings now come out to meet the victor, and the victory reveals him to be greater than his circumstances. There are some people who would have had their heads turned by worldly recognition from a king. But not Abraham. When John Knox was asked if he were frightened at the prospect of meeting the Queen of Scotland, he replied that he had just spent four hours with God. Such a man can't be much impressed with a mere king.

LORD, MAY WE KNOW OUR TRUE SIZE IN THEE.

December 15

MELCHIZEDEK (14:18)

This is the first mention of this man, the greatest character of the Old Testament. We would consider Abraham to be the greatest character if the New Testament did not tell us flatly that Melchizedek was the better (Heb. 7:7). If you were reading the Bible for the first time you would soon pass by this figure who fills but three verses, jointly with Abraham, and is never found again until a verse is given him in the Psa. 110:4. But the epistle to the Hebrews blossoms into several chapters concerning him and his role in the plan of God. We do not even know his name, for *melek* is the word for *king* and *tsidek* is the word for righteousness (as in Jer. 23:6). But he was a portrait of Christ, welcoming the pilgrim after the battle.

LORD, MAY WE ACCEPT THY STANDARDS.

December 16

SODOM . . . SALEM (14:17, 18)

There is a vast difference between corruption and peace, and a vast difference between their kings and what they stand for. Abraham acknowledged his dependence upon the king of Salem, but his total independence of the king of Sodom. He knew that he was inferior to Salem and paid tithes to him; he knew that he was superior to Sodom, and refused to be beholden to him in any way. Before the king of Salem he was humble and deferent; before the king of Sodom he was firm and uncompromising. It was spiritual insight that made him aware of the difference between the two men. The one stood for God, the other stood for the lusts of the flesh. He knew, as though by instinct, where there was power and where there was peril.

LORD GIVE US SPIRITUAL INSIGHT.

December 17

KING OF SALEM (14:18)

This is the second of his titles. He is the perfect type of the priesthood of Christ (Psa. 110:4), as he is the symbol of eternity. He comes out of somewhere, disappears into nowhere, somewhere, but, purposely, God does not record his ancestry nor his posterity (Heb. 7:3, 6). After the warfare with the four kings, God sends the priest of righteousness and peace to crown Abraham with fellowship and to bring him into a new relationship with Himself. When Abraham was faithful, God revealed Himself still more to him. If you win the immediate victory you will have the consequent blessing of a new knowledge of God.

LORD, EVER REVEAL THYSELF TO US.

December 18

BREAD AND WINE (14:18)

Bread is the symbol of life (John 6:50), and wine is the symbol of joy (Psa. 104:15). These are the accompaniments of righteousness and peace. And when they are given by the One who is both King of righteousness and King of peace they are given in royal fashion. A King can do no

(Continued on page 43)

A Window on the World

The London Times, greatest newspaper in the British Empire, prints each day a letter from its columns of one hundred years before. On October 13, 1950, the *Times* printed excerpts from an editorial written at that time in connection with the setting up of the Roman Catholic Church officially in the British Isles. It should be realized that the Roman Catholic Church was not permitted to operate publicly in the British Isles until the autumn of 1850. Now, a century later, the Roman Church has been celebrating the centenary with fanfare and trumpets and taking its place as a matter of course and claiming to dominate much in British life. *The London Times* on Monday, October 14, 1850, wrote as follows:

"Dr. Wiseman had been named Cardinal by the Pope, under the title of Archbishop of Westminster, at a Consistory held in Rome on September 30. A leading article commented:

" 'We really do not wish to attach undue importance to what we shall be told is a mere question of words. It may be that the elevation of Dr. Wiseman to the imaginary Archbishopric of Westminster signifies no more than if the Pope had been pleased to confer on the editor of the *Tablet* the rank and title of Duke of Smithfield. But if this appointment be not intended as a clumsy joke, we confess that we can only regard it as one of the grossest acts of folly and impertinence which the Court of Rome has ventured to commit since the Crown and the people of England threw off his yoke. The selection of the city of Westminster, the very seat of the Court and the Parliament of England, and the appropriation by a foreign priest or potentate of the time-honoured name which is most identified with the glories of our history and even with the tombs of our statesmen, our soldiers, and our kings, is a most ostentatious interference with those rights and associations to which we, as a nation, are most unanimously and devotedly attached. . . . The Pope and his advisers have mistaken our complete tolerance for indifference to their designs; they have mistaken the renovated zeal of the Church in this country for a return towards Romish bondage; but we are not sorry that their indiscretion has led them to show the power which Rome would exercise, if she could, by an act which the laws of this country will never recognize, and which the public opinion of this country will deride and disavow, whenever his Grace the titular Archbishop of Westminster thinks fit to enter his diocese'."

Unfortunately, the editor of *The London Times* of a century ago did not sufficiently comprehend the "mystery of iniquity" which is bound up in the Roman Catholic Church. He would probably have been appalled if he had seen what progress Rome would make in a century. We in our country should see the arrogance with which Roman priests act and speak and realize what is in store for us.

Dr. Joseph P. Free, Professor of Archaeology at Wheaton College, has recently announced plans for the Fourth Wheaton College Bible Lands Cruise, scheduled to sail from New York, February 15, 1951. Anyone interested should communicate with Dr. Joseph Free, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.

A news item in the *New York Times* shows how the Roman Catholics run their charities. Cardinal Spellman has appointed the Rev. John F. McCarthy as Executive Director of the Institutional Commodity Service of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York. The news item explains that this service is the "volume purchasing agency for diocesan supported institutions."

What savings would be effected if all Protestant institutions for the aged, the blind, orphans, etc., had one central buying agency which could purchase wholesale and get every advantage of market turn? The Bible says that the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.

Our readers will be interested in the news that has recently been received from the Evangelical Literature Depot in Calcutta, India, in connection with the translation of the book, *Teaching the Word of Truth*, written by the Editor of *Eternity*. This book has gone out to many thousands in English and has been translated into several foreign languages, and now is about to appear in Hindi. The publisher writes, "Arrangements are being made to get this book translated as soon as possible, and your prayers and the prayers of the readers of your good magazine are solicited so that this book might indeed prove valuable to the spiritual growth of the Indian Christians who will use it." Will you join in prayer to this end?

Wherever the Catholics are in charge they do all they can to stop the circulation of the Bible. Recently in Rocky Hill, Conn., the Gideon Society received the approval of the Board of Education to distribute Bibles to public school pupils who wanted them. Roman Catholics in the community protested, and the distribution of Bibles stopped. Later a member of the Gideon Society spoke in the school and left some Bibles for pupils who might want them. A joint committee of the Catholic men's and women's clubs then wrote to the State Board of Education asking action to stop Bible distribution. Commenting on this, *The Lutheran Outlook* said, "We thought that the Knights of Columbus' ad last year said, 'The Bible is a Catholic Book.' Why is there such fear that it may fall into the hands of Catholic children? Or was that ad only for Protestant consumption?"

The apostle Paul's surrender was unconditional.

YESTERDAY'S BOOKS

with a message for today

By Basil F. C. Atkinson

"No room for them in the Inn. When Jesus came into our earth, the world turned Him out of doors; but when He comes to sanctify, He turns the world out of doors. Reader, has He turned the world out of thy doors, —the doors of thy heart?"

This is the quaint characteristic, and powerful exposition of Luke 2:7 made by John Berridge, the evangelical leader of the eighteenth century, vicar of Everton, Bedfordshire, powerful revivalist, preacher, and open-air speaker. It is perhaps one of the best existing thoughts upon the Saviour's birth that can be found expressed in a few words. It is to be found in the edition of John Berridge's works issued by Rev. Richard Whittingham in 1838 some forty years after the great preacher's death.

This month we are to examine what preachers and reformers of various ages have had to say about the birth of Christ. For many centuries the Christian church has been accustomed to think of the Saviour's birth as having taken place in the mid-winter season. Probably it actually took place on the feast of the tabernacles about the begining of October. What we call Christmas time is a very ancient heathen festival. While there are obvious dangers in associating this festival with the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the church has always been right to turn her thoughts specially to the birth at a fixed season of the year. The actual time is not of importance.

Here we have extracts from a Christmas sermon of John Wycliffe, the fourteenth century English reformer and morning star, as he has been well called, of the Reformation. They are taken, with spelling modernized, from the first volume of Wyc-

liffe's *Select English Works*, edited by Thomas Arnold in 1869.

"This day men sing in worship of the Trinity; but the most is of the manhood of Christ, the which is both God and man for the love of mankind. The Gospel tells what things befell in the birth of this child. The Emperor of Rome was then in his flowers, and in peace on each side, as this author of peace ordained. Men say that this emperor was cleped Octavian; and in the two and fortieth year, when he was in most peace, was Christ born, God and man, in the land under this emperor.

"Both Joseph and Mary were the house of David, and the city of Bethlehem was David's by some property, for David was born in that city, as the Book of Kings tells. And so Joseph went with Mary, that was his wife, in to Bethlehem to make his profession that the emperor bade make. They brought an ox and an ass with them, as men say, for this encheson;—Mary was great with child; therefore she rode upon the ass; the ox they brought for to sell, for Jews hate begging. And Bethlehem was filled of men before they came to the town; and so they had none harbour, but dwelt in a common stable, and these two beasts with them, till time came to use them.

"And it fell, while they were there, Mary bare her child, and she wrapt Christ with clothes, and put him in the cratch, for she had no better place to put him in all the house. And so, as men sing and trow, Christ lay before an ox and an ass.

"Here may we see how Christ loved common povert on many manners; for he chose to be harboured in common place, without pride, and without worldly help both of men and of women, and he chose a poor cradle that the child was put in."

Here is part of the opening section of George Whitefield's sermon on Matthew 1:21. It is sermon No. 16 in volume 5 of the edition of his works published in London in 1772.

"When we consider the condescension and love of the Lord Jesus Christ, in submitting to be born of a virgin, a poor sinful creature; and especially as He knew how He was to be treated in this world; that He was to be despised, scoffed at, and at last to die a painful, shameful, and ignominious death; that He should be treated as though He was the offscouring of all mankind; used, not like the son of a man, and, therefore, not at all like the Son of God; the consideration of these things should make us to admire the love of the Lord Jesus Christ who was so willing to offer Himself as a ransom for the sins of the people, that when the fulness of time was come, Christ came, made of a woman, made under the law: He came according to the eternal counsel of the Father; He came, not in glory or in splendour, not like Him who brought all salvation with Him: no, He was born in a stable, and laid in a manger; oxen were His companions."

The End

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Those who seek to do God's will receive God's wisdom.

INTERNATIONAL Sunday School LESSONS

BY DR. ROBERT R. FRITSCH

DECEMBER 3, 1950

The Stewardship of Life

LESSON TEXT: ROMANS 12:1-2; 6-8; 2 CORINTHIANS 8:3-5; PHILIPPIANS 2:25-30

***Golden Text:* "I appeal to you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:1, R.S.V.)**

Motives
- God's love
- God's gifts
- God's mercies

Living for Him
- By choice
- Transformed
- Obedient

Giving to Him
- The person
- The purse
- The whole of life

Our lesson of last Lord's day concerned the giving of money for the Lord's work. But let us learn today that the contribution of money to missions, to the Church, to charity, to institutions of mercy, is after all but a small segment of the large and important subject of stewardship, which, according to our lesson topic, should comprehend all of life.

Heart and Purse

God is more interested in the "person" than in the "purse," for He knows that, if He has the heart of the person, He has his purse too, since the heart and the purse open on the same spring! A young man in love with a girl will spend a little money on her. A man who is interested in a good cause will contribute to it.

It is for this reason that Jesus asks us to pray that the Lord may send laborers into the harvest field of the world, for He knows that if He has those who will sincerely pray, He has those who will gladly pay for the support of missions, and among them there are those who will go in person.

The motive for giving should always be love. The great "love chapter" (1 Cor. 13) is intended to teach us that, for "though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing" (v. 3).

God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son unto death for us. We, in turn, are to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, which would certainly seem to imply all of life.

We must realize that all we possess comes ultimately from God, and happy the man who is willing to consider himself as a trustee under God of all he is and of all he possesses. To return to Him and to use for Him what He has given to us implies that we recognize His Lordship over all our life—and "if we do not crown Him Lord of all, we cannot crown Him Lord at all."

In the spirit of this thought we can sing:

We give Thee but Thine own,
Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee.

May we Thy bounties thus
As stewards true receive,
And gladly as Thou blessest us,
To Thee our first-fruits give.

And we believe Thy word,
Though dim our faith may be;
Whate'er for Thine we do, O Lord,
We do it unto Thee.

One of the effective phases of the Christian Endeavor movement was the emphasis laid at its monthly consecration service on "life service." Many a young life was dedicated to Christian service, whether at home or abroad, after solemnly promising: "I'll be what You want me to be, dear Lord. I'll do what You want me to do, dear Lord. I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord." This means something more than a nickel or a dime on the collection plate—it is the willingness to recognize and to acknowledge all that the stewardship of the whole of one's life means to a Christian who is fully surrendered to his Lord.

Reasonable Service

As in John 3:16 we find God's love expressed in the gift of His Son, so in Romans 11:30-32, Paul stresses the mercy of God, the word occurring four times in these three verses, serving as an introduction to the first part of our lesson today, the first verse of which is also our Golden Text.

The word "therefore" in verse one means that if God showed so great mercy to Israel and also to the Gentile world, we ought to do something about it as a moral obligation, for it is a logical, a reasonable, request that Paul makes when he says:

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Paul does not order, command, or compel, but with a "sweet reasonableness" exhorts us to give our whole life unto Him who gave Himself wholly unto death; in other words, that we may be willing to live for Him who died for us.

We have indeed been bought with a price, therefore we are no longer our own. Our privilege, and our duty it is then to glorify God in our body and in our spirit, which are God's. One cannot read this pronouncement of St. Paul (1 Cor. 7:19-20) without recognizing in it the thought of life stewardship.

Thus offering our very bodies with their several members, we may note a contrast between the bodies of Old Testament sacrificial animals and the life of the New Testament Christian. The Old Testament victims were irrational and irresponsible animals. The offering on the part of the New Testament Christian of his "treasure, time, and talent," of his body, yea, of his whole life is a deliberate and voluntary one, hence the expression "a reasonable service" is translated by some as "a spiritual service."

It is for that reason that Paul calls it a "living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God." And it is an unspeakably happy life, for no life can be as satisfying as the one lived in obedience and conformity to the will of God. Verse 2 shows us how His will may be discerned, how we may be able to judge spiritual and moral problems, so as to do only that which is well-pleasing to Him.

"Be not conformed," says Paul, "to this age, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The "new man" in Christ Jesus will naturally be renewed in mind. No longer selfish and self-centered, he is now "Christ-centered." What he once loved, he now hates; what he once hated, he now loves. "Casting down imagina-

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Dr. Fritsch, Emeritus Professor of English Bible at Muhlenberg College, is engaged in full time Bible conference work.

tions (reasonings), and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, he will bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of God."

So, whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is always the question arising in the mind of any one who has accepted the principle involved in the phrase, "the stewardship of the whole of life." And with the revelation of what God's will is in answer to that prayer, comes the response, "I delight to do Thy will, O God."

And with the desire to do the will of God, He grants the gifts and talents which will naturally differ, but are equally important if exercised as "unto Him," and not from selfish motives nor for selfish purposes. Verses 6-8 speak of this. How careful the servant of the Lord should be in His service! Such service should be sincere; without hypocrisy; unselfish; whole-hearted; ready to do with our might what our hands find to do for Him. The Holy Spirit, who indwells the very body of the consecrated believer, will empower and enable him to render acceptable service within the range and realm of God's will.

Joy in Giving

In a very interesting way Paul brings together in 2 Cor. 8:3-5 (the second part of our lesson) the generosity of the Macedonian Christians with respect to contributions in terms of money and their willingness to offer themselves as helpers in the Lord's service.

Paul takes great pleasure in commending the liberality of the churches in Macedonia, as they contributed to the needs of the Christians in Jerusalem. They did this even amid their own trials and afflictions, but in spite of their poverty they found great joy in the thought that by their sacrifices they were helping other believers to endure their afflictions. They did so also without any urging, rather did they purpose of themselves to give out of their slender means.

But when they did give, they surprised Paul by giving him much more than he could have expected or had hoped, in fact (v. 4), it seems as though they actually had to persuade him to take it, for he may have thought that in their ardent zeal they were giving more than they in their circumstances could or should.

It is the statement in verse 5 that arrests our attention: "they first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God," a clear case of the "person" before the "purse," but the purse did necessarily open up. We may also find in this statement of commendation the principle that "the gift without the giver is bare." And if the offering at a church service is given in the right spirit, the pastor may properly pray that God may bless "the gifts and the givers."

In Philippians 2:25-30 (the last portion of our printed lesson) Paul speaks of Epaphroditus (his name means "handsome" or "lovely"; Epaphras in Col. 4:12 is a shorter form of this word). He had brought financial help from the Philippian Christians to Paul in his Roman prison. Paul was planning to send Timothy to them soon (v. 19), and even hoped to visit them in person (v. 24), but because of hard work, Epaphroditus had become very sick, so that he was near death. The Christians in Phillippi had heard about this concerning their friend and Christian brother, so Paul sends him to them at once with this letter to the Philippians.

Paul thanks God for His mercy shown Epaphroditus in restoring him to health, and for his mercy in restoring his helper to him in distressing circumstances, and thus sparing him much sorrow. The church in Philippi is asked to receive him with all gladness, and to honor him as one who, as their representative, did not spare his health in his desire to help Paul, willing even, if it were necessary, to give his life. Surely such men in the early church were completely yielded to the Lord and this explains the rapid growth of the early Christian community.

To those who are willing conscientiously to enter into the full practical experience of the stewardship of the whole of life, we would suggest that they read slowly and thoughtfully the words of the well-known hymn: "Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee," and then, reading it again, use it as a prayer. As to stewardship of life—the hymn embraces "my moments and my days"; my hands and my feet; my voice and my lips; my silver and my gold; my intellect, my will, and my heart; my love, yea, myself, for "I will be ever, only, all, for Thee."

ON SPENDING TIME

When the apostles, Peter and John, were set free by the Council, "being let go, they went to their own company," which was the company of "them that believed." When the carrier pigeon is "let go," it flies to its home. When the needle is "let go," it flies to the magnet. When you are "let go" (that is, when you are free from your duties), where do you go? What company do you naturally seek?

Some have asked the question, "Where shall I go when I die?" Where do you go now you are alive? The answer to the first question may depend very much upon the answer to the second.

DECEMBER 10, 1950

The Stewardship of the Gospel

LESSON TEXT: ACTS 8:4-8; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20; PHILIPPIANS 1:12-18

Golden Text: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy" (1 Cor. 4:1-2, R.S.V.)

Good News
- The coming King
- The promised Seed
- His eternal reign

Repent and Believe
- The heart of the Gospel
- The message committed
- A new creation

From the Christian standpoint, the stewardship of life (last week's theme) naturally includes the stewardship of money and of the Gospel. Having discussed the stewardship of life and of money (Nov. 26), it is well that we consider the stewardship of the Gospel today.

Ever since the race was alienated from God because of the sin of "man's first disobedience" (Gen. 3), dominion over the earth passed from the "first Adam" to Satan "the prince of this world," who is in willful rebellion against God and His moral government. "Bad news" is the pronouncement of the curse upon man and his environment, but in the midst of it (Gen. 3:15) is "good news" (the meaning of the word Gospel), the promise of "the seed of the woman" who was to come into human history in order to destroy the kingdom of Satan, and thus to re-establish God's government of righteousness and peace in the earth.

The Coming King

The One who is here spoken of as the seed of the woman is none other than the virgin-born Son of God, the last Adam (1 Cor. 15:45), who, as the head of a new race, rescued and redeemed from the wreck of the old one, is to set up His glorious kingdom, of which there shall be no end. Thus we find the closest possible relation between Genesis 3:15 and John 3:16, showing how the Gospel of salvation

and of the kingdom of God roots back, by way of promise, prophecy, and hope to the wonderful pronouncements of blessings in the Old Testament which are to come upon our earth with the coming of the King.

This theme runs as a golden thread through the whole Bible. In every generation there have been those who have lived in joyous anticipation of that glorious day, and men have been specially chosen of God to proclaim the good news of God's purpose to bring His plan and His promises related thereto to a happy consummation. This climax is anticipated in Revelation 12:10, "Now is come salvation, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ," for "the kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ" (11:15).

Enoch, in wicked times, walked with God in obedience to His moral government and thus overcame the power of death, the sting of the curse, (even as sin is said to be the sting of death, 1 Cor. 15:56). Noah, himself a preacher of righteousness, walked with God, and thus through faithful obedience survived the flood, which was brought upon the earth to destroy everything that was an offence against God's government.

The Promised Seed

At the time of man's deepest degradation (of which Rom. 1:21-32 may well be a terribly realistic description), God calls Abraham to walk before Him in separation from the world, in perfection of character and conduct, and as the recipient of a wonderful promise, that in his seed all the nations (the Gentiles) of the earth should be blessed (Gen. 22:18).

Now the seed of Abraham means the Hebrew people in general, but, as Paul says in Romans 3:16, God spoke in this promise not of seeds as of many, but of one, which is Christ, so that the blessing of Abraham was to come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:14). Therefore, the seed of the woman is also to be of the seed of Abraham, and to Him and to His salvation are the saints of the Old Testament looking forward, waiting, a hopeful, an expectant people, even as Jacob (Israel) suddenly exclaims in Gen. 49:18, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord," and when Jesus, "the son of David, the son of Abraham" appeared as a new-born child in the Temple, the aged patriarch Simeon took him up in his arms and said, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

And thinking of Jesus as the seed of David also, read what Gabriel has to say to His mother Mary in Luke 1:32, 33, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of His father David—and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

The Lord Shall Reign

Of His kingdom the Old Testament speaks frequently. In the redemption song of Moses (Ex. 15:18) he declares that "the Lord shall reign for ever and ever." David, himself a steward of the mysteries of God, speaks of the Lord as King for ever and ever, and in Psalm 146:10 we are assured that "the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations," a prospect worthy of a Hallelujah (Praise ye the Lord), with which the Psalm closes. And what a picture of the King we have in Psalms 45 and 72, as they throw a spotlight upon His throne, as it were, revealing Him to us in His beauty, majesty, power, righteousness, and glory. No wonder that all the nations shall call Him blessed, as they live under His blessing, his enemies having "licked the dust" (Psa. 72:9, 17).

The prophets too are stewards of God's promises, to be proclaimed to the uttermost part of the earth. Zechariah 14:9 takes up the refrain, "and the Lord shall be King over all the earth." But Isaiah, whom we like to call the evangelical prophet (and "evangelical" is a Greek adjective referring to the "Gospel," "good news"), and whose name is virtually the same as that of Jesus (both meaning "salvation"), has much to say about the seed of the woman, the virgin's son (7:14), who shall be known as Immanuel, "God with us" (quoted in Mt. 1:23), the Child born (His humanity), the Son given (His diety), in order to take upon His shoulder the government; wonderful in name, mighty God in power, Prince of peace throughout His eternal and beneficent reign (Isa. 9:6).

Repent and Believe

John the Baptist has the honor of having introduced Jesus to the multitude as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29), for the sin problem must be settled. Therefore, the first word of the message of John the Baptist is "Repent," and the reason for this is, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:2). According to Matthew 4:17, Jesus takes up the message of John as He begins to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand," or as Mark 1:15 has it, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel."

This matter of repentance means that the natural man, as a son of the first Adam, cannot become a subject of God's kingdom until there has been a complete transformation of his personality, a change of mind, of heart, and of attitude with respect to the kingdom of Satan and of this world. Jesus therefore says, speaking to learned Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again (or, from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

This is, of course, the heart of the Gospel, and to the Twelve Jesus commits the stewardship of this message saying (in Mk. 10:7), "and as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This commission included power over demons, Satan's emissaries to hinder in every way possible the preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom of God. In fact, Satan succeeded in putting the King to death, placing a crown of thorns on His brow in mockery. But by a greater power than that of Satan, Jesus, having been made a curse for us by dying on a cross, was raised from the dead, and thus triumphed over the forces of sin, death, Hell, and the grave.

Witnesses

Thus, in the power of the risen Lord and of the Holy Spirit, His disciples were to go into all the world as witnesses to their Saviour, Lord, and King, beginning at Jerusalem, through Judaea and Samaria, unto the uttermost part of the world (the Gentile world). How these ambassadors of Christ regarded this stewardship of the Gospel may be observed by their faithful witnessing throughout the book of Acts, as multitudes of believers were added unto their company, candidates for citizenship in the kingdom of God when it shall appear in all its glory at the second advent of the King.

In Acts 8:1 Jerusalem, Judaea, and Samaria have heard the Gospel from these early Christians, many of whom, because of fierce persecution, were scattered throughout these regions preaching the Word (v. 4). Philip, the evangelist of Caesarea, seeks to fulfill the stewardship of the Gospel by going to Samaria on a special mission to preach Christ to the Samaritans.

Endued with power to perform miracles, to challenge the demons and unclean spirits to leave the bodies of those possessed by them, and to heal those who were paralyzed and lame, he was able to manifest in miniature

what conditions will be like when God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things shall have passed away. Naturally there was great joy in the city of Samaria (v. 8).

An entirely new creation is involved in the establishing of the kingdom of God in its final, full, and glorious phase, and anyone who believes the Gospel of Christ and the Christ of the Gospel as Saviour, is a new creation too (2 Cor. 5:17), also because old things are passed away, and all things have become new, for he has been translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Through the atoning death of Christ, God has reconciled the world to Himself. To Paul and to the Church has been given the ministry of reconciliation, this stewardship of the Gospel, as ambassadors of Christ, for the ministers of the Word represent Christ Himself as they beseech men to be reconciled to God through Christ, who, knowing no sin, was made sin and a sin-offering in our behalf. Having no righteousness of our own, we are counted as righteous in Him; and thus reconciled to God, we are accepted by Him as His children, and heirs of His everlasting kingdom of glory.

For the Gospel's Sake

Paul in Philippians 1:12 is a prisoner for the Gospel's sake in Rome. But he rejoices in the fact that his bonds do not confine and limit the Gospel, for by his imprisonment the Gospel has penetrated Caesar's court, and has aroused the courage of other preachers of the Gospel to greater boldness.

Paul cared little about physical conveniences or about his physical environment, if only he could have the opportunity to preach Christ, as he did to the warden of the jail in Philippi. This man's conversion together with that of Lydia (Acts 16) marked the beginning of the Church in that city.

Paul's passion was to preach Christ, and in so preaching he rejoiced (v. 18). He was glad to hear of others sharing this stewardship of the Gospel as they too preached Christ, although some may have been tainted with personal ambition and pride; some may have been introducing some Judaizing doctrines; and others, even, selfishly may have been speaking derogatorily of Paul and his preaching in order to organize a faction for their personal glory.

But Paul is willing that they do so, if Christ be preached, which is what matters. May we in our day sincerely seek to fulfill our duty and privilege as stewards of the Gospel by giving our "time, and treasure, and talents," so that Christ may be made known unto the ends of the earth.

DECEMBER 17, 1950

Victorious Daily Living

LESSON TEXT: 2 CORINTHIANS 11:18-30; 12:8-10

Golden Text: "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (Jas. 1:2, 3, R.S.V.)

Testing
- Problems inevitable
- God a refuge
- No separation from Christ

Opposition and Persecution
- Paul met them
- Paul's testimony
- Strength in weakness

If a newborn child were, shortly after birth, able to read Job 5:7, "Man is born unto trouble (labor and sorrow), as the sparks fly upward," it might well be discouraged by the rather dismal prospect of such a life. As the years come and go, questions will arise as to why the world is so constituted that these conditions "must needs be." What are the evil forces, and who are the sinister agents, which inflict innumerable sufferings upon mankind?

It will not be possible for us here to discuss such questions, although help can be derived from the Bible, the Book of Life, which describes the part Satan and his subject demons play in troubling the earth. Our lesson rather asks us to face the problem and tells us how to live victoriously and triumphantly, as from day to day we meet the trials so common to mankind.

Testing Permitted

In the Bible we meet men like Job, David, and Paul, to mention only a few, who at times were overwhelmed with great sorrows, tribulations, and persecutions. The book of Job is a classic treatise concerning the sufferings of the righteous. But the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends, who had done little more than make his sufferings more acute.

James (in 5:11) calls our attention to Job's steadfastness, his patient endurance, in other words, and to the purpose God had in permitting Satan to test him. Job knew that God could do no wrong, therefore he would trust Him, even though He were to slay him.

A familiar phrase is "under the circumstances," as we often use it. Some one suggested that Christians should not use it, for they, if any one, should live "above the circumstances." In the face of his enemies, David exclaims in Psalm 56:3, "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee," and better yet, Isaiah (12:2) says, "God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid."

David found his God to be a "refuge in time of trouble" (Psa. 9:9), "a very present help in trouble" (46:1), and was assured, (in 138:7) that "though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me; Thou shalt stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and Thy right hand shall save me. The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me; Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever." Only with the help of the Lord is victorious living possible—but it is possible, for we can do all things through Him which strengtheneth us!

No Separation

Paul knew this. In Romans 8:35-39 he raises the question: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ; shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" He has the answer: "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors (more than victorious) through Him That loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." This means victory.

And when our last enemy, death, stares us in the face, we need fear no evil, "for Thou art with me," and with Paul again we may exclaim: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

In studying the first portion of our printed lesson, taken from the eleventh chapter of Second Corinthians, we should begin with the tenth chapter, as an introduction to Paul's catalogue of his sufferings for the sake of the Gospel he was preaching.

He was to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, which meant that he had to work on Satan's territory. Opposition and persecution were therefore to be expected. It is clear from 10:10-18 that slanderous tongues were seeking to break down Paul's character, reputation, and influence. His enemies, while challenging his apostleship, were mag-

nifying themselves and their work. Four chapters, 10 to 13, Paul writes to defend his ministry, although he feels like a fool as he refers to his family history and his willingness to endure all forms of sufferings and hardship for the sake of Him who had called him into His service, and of his converts whom he has constantly on his heart. He is very "jealous over them" (11:2), with a godly jealousy, unwilling that they should become the prey of those who preach another Jesus, whom he had not been preaching.

He, therefore, asks them to listen to him as though he were a fool, for he knows that Jesus did not send him to speak about himself. He is, of course, not speaking in a spirit of pride, but merely to show that his background, his qualifications, and his divine call were as substantial and valid as those who sought to tear down his character and his work, and thus to seduce his converts.

Since in their wisdom they endured the teaching of false teachers, even though they were domineering, preying upon them, lording it over them, and even insulting them—since they saw fit to endure the conduct of such deceivers, surely they would be willing to give ear to one more fool, himself, as he readily admitted with shame that he was not equal to those imposters in ability and zeal.

But he promises to speak freely and boldly about himself, quite willing that they should judge his credentials even though it might seem foolish and egotistic for him to do so, as it certainly did to his fine and sensitive spirit. Necessity, however, was upon him, for the welfare of his converts.

Paul's Sufferings

He now begins at 11:22 (a passage which runs to 12:10) to record what might be considered to be his autobiography, which should, of course, be supplemented by what Luke tells us about Paul in Acts.

The Judaizing teachers who were opposing Paul prided themselves in their ancestry and in their position as teachers. Paul briefly declares that his "pedigree" was as good as theirs, and that his persecution and sufferings showed that he was sincerely trying to carry out his mission at whatever cost to his personal comforts, for he wished to be "obedient to the Heavenly vision."

As to his ancestry, he is of the seed of Abraham, a Hebrew, and of the commonwealth of Israel, to all of which his opponents had no more valid claim than he. And as a preacher and servant of Christ, he had higher credentials on several counts than they had, although he again feels that people may call him foolish, even crazy, to refer to what he is about to mention, that is, his sufferings in the course of his preaching ministry, which he considered to be the seal, as it were, of his apostleship, for in Acts 9:16 it was revealed to him in advance that he would have to suffer many and great things for Jesus' sake.

So in verse 23 he speaks of his labor as more abundant than the average, of stripes inflicted beyond count, of frequent imprisonments, perhaps five to seven times, and about numerous occasions when he was facing death itself. Some of these experiences are described in the book of Acts, notably his imprisonment in Philippi (16:19-40), with a reference to the infliction of many stripes (v. 23).

In verse 24 of our lesson Paul speaks of having five times received of the Jews "forty stripes save one," that is minus one. In Deuteronomy 25:3 forty stripes are allowed when punishing criminals, but with a caution that care be taken not to exceed that number. Thus the custom arose of inflicting only thirty-nine, so that if a mistake should be made in counting, the number actually inflicted would not exceed forty. The "many stripes" in Acts 16:23 were inflicted by Roman not Jewish authorities, the "beaten with rods" in v. 25 of our lesson.

Paul speaks of having been stoned on one occasion, a full account of which is given in Acts 14:19 where we read that it happened in Lystra in the course of his first missionary journey. Some think that his spirit left his body at this time, explaining his experience in Paradise, the third Heaven (as described in 2 Cor. 12). He revived, and continued his journey the next day.

We know nothing about the shipwrecks (mentioned in v. 25), the one which happened on his way to Rome (Acts 27) having happened later. His having spent a night and a day in the deep may mean that after one of the shipwrecks he was adrift on some wreckage for that period of time before he was rescued or reached shore.

Paul's Journeys

At verse 26 Paul speaks of his numerous journeys which we speak of as his missionary journeys. Eight kinds of perils and dangers with which he had to contend are mentioned in verses 26 and 27, some of which we find described in Acts 13 to 28. Traveling conditions more than nineteen hundred years ago, in spite of good Roman roads, may account for some of his hardships, but Satanic hindrances and opposition to the invasion of his territory by a zealous preacher of the Gospel would explain many which he mentions, and probably more which are not recorded.

His most serious problem was the "false brethren" (v. 26), who sought by false teaching to subvert the faith of his converts. Thus "the care of all the churches" was a heavy burden on his heart as he had to face the physical perils along the way. He suffers with (the true meaning of the word to "sympathize" with) the weaknesses and remorse of his converts who might fall a prey to these false teachers, for which reason he will continue to glory in the charges brought by his defamers, even though "they cause some people to despise him; but they are more glorious than the things of which his opponents boast, for they increase his likeness to Christ and his unlikeness to them" (Int. Crit. Com. p. 331).

Strength in Weakness

Surely this is a victorious life, rising above circumstances and conditions. In the second printed portion of our lesson Paul speaks of a "thorn in the flesh," a messenger of Satan, apparently to keep him from spiritual pride. We do not know what it was, and so much has been written about it by way of conjecture that we actually know less just because of the many conjectures!

What we do know is that Paul prayed for its removal, but the Lord asked him to submit, for His grace was sufficient for him, and that he would find His strength operative in his weakness. Most gladly therefore does Paul submit, that he may the better realize the strength and power of Christ working in him and through him.

The high note of victorious living is sounded in verse 10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong!"

DECEMBER 24, 1950

The Saviour is Born

LESSON TEXT: LUKE 2:1-16

Golden Text: "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11, R.S.V.)

THE CENTER OF HISTORY

Through the Old Testament there runs an important message: A Saviour is coming! Our lesson today tells us that He has come, and running through the New Testament is the further message that He is coming again. Jesus is the center of history, in fact, history is "His story." It is not by accident that we date our letters 1950, as from the birth of Christ (although His birth may have been 5 or 6 B.C., because of a chronological error).

In Bethlehem
Of a virgin
The angel's song

There is nothing more remarkable in human history than the fact that, by the stroke of a pen in Rome, a Roman Emperor, Caesar Augustus, who knew nothing and cared less about the Bible of that time, that is, the Old Testament, should have made it possible for the birth of Jesus to have taken place in Bethlehem as prophesied in Micah 5:2.

This verse reads, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth (referring to His humanity) unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," or, as the margin has it, "from the days of eternity" (referring to His deity).

When in Matthew 2 the "wise men" had come to inquire of Herod where the King of the Jews had been born, the men, learned in the law, who were asked to find out, could ascertain the answer only in this Scripture passage. But how, from the human standpoint, could this child be born in Bethlehem, of a mother living a simple life in Nazareth of Galilee, as prophesied by Micah?

A Census Ordered

The order which emanated from Rome, that there should be an "enrollment" made throughout the Empire, would naturally affect Palestine, since that country had become a part of that Empire some decades before. The time element involved in the statement (v. 2), that Cyrenius was governor of Syria, which would include Palestine, is too uncertain, because we do not know all the necessary details. The enrollment may have been ordered as a registration of citizens with a view to taxation.

The Romans, for good reasons, allowed the Jews in Palestine to retain many of their social, political, and religious practices. They were very careful to preserve genealogical records, and ancestral history was very important to them. When such registrations as the one here in question were ordered, the Jews reported to ancestral "headquarters," for which reason Joseph, who was of the family-stock of David (v. 4), went to Bethlehem, the city of David, where, according to the book of Ruth, David was born.

All that we know of the infancy of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 1 and 2 and Luke 1 and 2, and it would be well to read these four chapters carefully. In the background is the remarkable prophecy of Genesis 3:15 concerning "the seed of the woman," which is taken up in Isaiah 7:14 in these words: "Behold, the virgin (note the article in the Hebrew) shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel," quoted in Matthew 1:23 (where we find the Greek form, Emmanuel, and the translation, "God with us").

Joseph and Mary

Now, in the fullness of God's time, Mary of Nazareth, who was betrothed to Joseph, conceived a child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph and Mary had not yet been living together as man and wife, which caused Joseph to think seriously of breaking off the engagement by a private arrangement.

But the angel of the Lord explained to him the relation of Mary's condition to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14, as in Luke 1:26-38 the angel Gabriel had revealed to Mary God's plan and purpose. Joseph was, therefore, asked not to put her away, but to take her as his wife, which he did, but the very significant verse, Matthew 1:25, definitely declares that they did not consummate their marriage until after the birth of Jesus, Mary's first-born son.

It was under these circumstances that Joseph took Mary along to Bethlehem. In verse 5, she is called his "espoused wife," and because she was with child, he would not leave her alone so near the end of her term.

Bethlehem was crowded when they arrived, for most of the Hebrews then living in Palestine were of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the south. Naturally it was difficult to find lodging, so that accomodations had to be found wherever possible. Apparently a cattle stall was offered to Joseph, the animals being out at pasture; perhaps a kind of cave, and in it a manger, a convenient "crib" for the newborn child.

In 2 Samuel 19:37, 38, there is an interesting story about Barzillai, an eighty year old man who befriended David while he was an exile during Absalom's rebellion. After Absalom's death and as David was returning to the throne, he wished to take Barzillai with him as a pensioner the rest of his days. But he said that he was too old, suggesting that David take his son, Chimham, and do for him as he had proposed doing for Barzillai himself.

In Jeremiah 41:17, we read of the habitation or lodging of Chimham at Bethlehem. One is tempted to think that David presented him with a small estate in his home town, Bethlehem, which was still in use in Jeremiah's time. It would be more than sentimentally interesting, if it had persisted as a lodging place down to New Testament times, and that Joseph might have found shelter somewhere on these premises. Thus would David have unwittingly prepared a place for his "son," Jesus, when He came to earth.

We know nothing about the exact date of Jesus' birth, whether in December or in the springtime of the year. The writer of these lines has been in Bethlehem several times and looked down from the eminence on which Bethlehem is located upon the green fields in which flocks were pastured by David himself, and from the time of Solomon to the time of Jesus these herds may have supplied the sacrificial victims for the altars of the Jerusalem Temple a half dozen miles to the north.

Good Tidings

One night the shepherds in that area were startled by a bright light shining round about them, as the angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and said: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all (the) people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The phrase, "I bring you good tidings" is one word in the Greek, a long verb, *euaggelizomai*, which we mention in order to say that our verb "evangelize" is derived from it; our noun, the "evangel;" the adjective, "evangelical," as well as the German, *das Evangelium*, the "Gospel," which word means "good news" ("good tidings" in the text, an exact translation of the Greek, "a good message").

Furthermore, the angel gives the shepherds a token by which they would be able to recognize the child of whom they were speaking, a strange sign indeed—a swaddled child lying in a manger. And yet how fitting that a "lamb" should be found in such a

place. Perhaps the reason why shepherds were the first ones to receive the announcement of Jesus' birth was that since the Lamb of God had been in a stable (as we say) near by, their flocks would no longer be furnishing the sacrificial lambs for the Temple altars.

Burton Scott Easton in the International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia thus describes the process of swaddling. "The oriental swaddling-clothes consist of a square of cloth and two or more bandages. The child is laid on the cloth diagnoally and the corners are folded over the feet and body and under the head, the bandages then being tied so as to hold the cloth in position. This device forms the clothing of the child until it is about a year old, and its omission (Ezek. 16:4) would be a token that the child had been abandoned."

Good Will

While the angel was speaking to the shepherds, suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host appeared, praising God, and saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men," the so-called "Gloria." Having learned this angelic refrain in childhood, we may find it difficult to appreciate the variation of the last phrase as given in recent translation.

After the King James Version had appeared in 1611, older manuscripts were discovered, in some of which the word *eudokia,* translated "good will" was found in the genitive case form, *eudokias,* therefore "to men of good will," or, as in the recent R.S.V.,, "peace among men with whom He is well pleased." In Matthew 3:17, the Father, speaking of the Son says, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." The verb here is immediately related to *eudokias* (in the Greek text, of course). Moffatt translates: "Peace on earth for men whom He favors," and in Matthew 3:17, "My Son, in whom I delight."

It is worth noting that angels are interested in our redemption; as Peter puts it "which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Pet. 1:12). Some one said that God never had so much trouble to keep the angels at home as on that night when Jesus, our Saviour, was born!

The shepherds certainly became interested, so they prepared at once to go to Bethlehem, in order to see for themselves what had happened, as the Lord had revealed it to them by His messengers (the meaning of the word "angel"). Indeed they came with haste, and they found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And having seen, they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child (this *Wunderkind,* as the Germans say, this "Wonder-child"), and thus all that heard, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

Mary herself wondered too, wondered and pondered (v. 19), preserving in her heart the details of what had been taking place until their significance would be fully revealed to her, as the child grew. And as for the shepherds, they returned to their work, glorifying and praising God for all things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And so we have been attending the first Christmas service. The church was the great out of doors; the vault of Heaven with its brilliant stars was the chandelier, but all suffused by the greater light of the glory of the Lord; the preacher was the angel of the Lord; his text, the proclamation of good news because of a Saviour born. A fitting anthem sung by the choir, consisting of angels, told of glory and peace, sung as it may not have been sung since, but as it may again be sung, on the day of our final redemption, by the combined choirs of Heaven and earth. Finally, the audience of shepherds, who when they heard the message, went to behold and then to tell every one they met the "wondrous story."

DECEMBER 31, 1950

Growing Through Fellowship with Christ

LESSON TEXT: JOHN 15:1-5; PHILIPPIANS 3:8-16

Golden Text: "One thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14, R.S.V.)

Fellowship in Prayer
Fellowship in Service
Fellowship with the Saints
Fellowship in Suffering

We remind ourselves, as we come to the last lesson of the year, that the general topic of this last quarter's lessons has been "Growth in Christian Living." Having first begun our Christian life which we received through faith in Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, we learned that, as newborn babes, we must grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must do this by means of the Bible, through which God speaks to us, and by prayer, which means that we are not only able, but invited and urged, to speak to God, and He promises to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. In this privilege of prayer lies the joy of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. Such fellowship, enjoyed by the great company of true believers, implies also fellowship one with another, and whatsoever we ask of the Father in the name of His Son we shall receive, according to His promise. This is a wonderful family, the Church of Christ.

Food and Exercise

Food and exercise are necessary for the development of a healthy body. And they are no less necessary for the life and growth of the spirit. We feed on the unadulterated milk of the Word, and, as we grow spiritually, it becomes solid food, contributing as such to spiritual maturity, the fullness of the stature of Christ Himself.

Exercise consists in Christian service, in teaching the Word so as to help others to develop spiritually, and we learn by teaching. To win souls for Christ is the missionary spirit characterizing the Christian, who has had a vital experience of Christ, which he wishes to share with others, whether at home or abroad.

To this end we should be good and faithful stewards of the many blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which God has poured into our lives. They are not for mere selfish enjoyment, but to be used for the extension of God's kingdom. Our talents, time, and treasure are to be used in His service; our bodies and our spirits belong to Him, for we have been bought with a price; we are therefore through them to glorify Him, whose we are and whom we serve.

Life in all realms of nature is marked by two forms of activity, production and reproduction. It must, therefore, be so also in the realm of the Spirit. The life of the Spirit will generate the fruit of the Spirit, which is described in Galatians 5:22, 23 as consisting of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance (self-control). And the Christian will want to reproduce himself by bringing others to a saving experience of the Lord Jesus. It is thus that Paul dares to say: "in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel," and in several cases, as in that of Timothy, for example, he speaks of his converts as "sons" (2 Tim. 1:2).

The secret of such "fruit-bearing," whether we may be thinking of spiritual graces and virtues, or of souls won for Christ, is found in the first por-

(*Continued on page* 40)

NEW BOOKS

All books reviewed by ETERNITY are available through ETERNITY Book Service, Box 2000, Philadelphia 3, Pa.

Here I Stand, A Life of Martin Luther. Roland Bainton. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. p. 422. $4.75.

Here I Stand is another biography of Martin Luther. Roland H. Bainton is Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History, in the Yale Divinity School and one of the country's leading specialists in Reformation history. The one great weakness of the book, from the Fundamentalists' standpoint, will be that the author does not seem to share the experience which was Luther's. Thus, differing from D'Aubignë, Bainton is a spectator of the events rather than a spiritual part of the events.

However, this reviewer feels that Bainton, as a spectator, has been most unbiased. In fact, no biography which I have read has drawn the issue more clearly in the controversy which Luther had with the Church. Which shall it be, the voice of the pope or the voice of the Word? Shall Peter be pre-eminent, or Christ?

With meticulous care Bainton traces the doctrinal argument in which Luther was involved. As to his conversion, Luther was confronted on the one hand by the monkish means of meriting salvation; and on the other by the Word of God as declared by St. Augustine and testified to by Staupitz, Vicar-General. Once captured by the Lord, he could not help being delivered from the Pope.

Bainton pushes back the curtains of time and with a literary style vivid to the point of life enables you to see and hear the breath-taking events, in language which keeps pace with the excitement of the hour.

The detailed research which the author has put into this account is tremendous. He gives you the feeling of a LIFE and TIME staff rolled into one with Hendrick Willem Van Loon as editor-in-chief. The running text has been kept free from the copious notes which are placed in the back of the book with line and page reference. In every scene Bainton sets the stage with the most minute details of daily life. You relive every moment of Luther's life as you read. Indeed, though this is not a historical novel, it may well be called a novel history.

The Life and Times of Martin Luther. J. H. Merle D'Aubignë, translated from the French by H. White. The Moody Press, Chicago, 1950. p. 559. $3.50.

This biography, *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARTIN LUTHER*, by J. H. Merle D'Aubignë, is the first of a number of biographies which are to be published as the Tyndale Series of Biography. The choice is excellent, first because of its subject matter, Martin Luther, father of the Reformation; second, for the author, D'Aubignë, who is world famous for his great work, *History of the Reformation,* selections from which go to make up this biography. D'Aubignë a French Protestant, of the eighteenth century, and himself a victim of grace, is in a position to record with sacred sympathy the regeneration of Martin Luther's soul which leads to the reformation.

The biography abounds with personal experiences of its subject. Martin Luther's childhood is tenderly told. His fears, aided by a bolt of lightning lead him to a monastery, where a bolt of grace leads him to the Lord.

Tracing the human elements which God was pleased to use toward Luther's conversion, D'Aubignë unfolds the trials and tribulations of a soul whose conscience refuses to harden by sin. Entering a monastery in order to find salvation, Luther discovers he had changed his garments but not his heart. He wrote in a letter later,—

"I was indeed a pious monk, and followed the rules of my order more strictly than I can express. If ever a monk could obtain heaven by his monkish works, I should have certainly have been entitled to it. Of this all the friars who have known me can testify. If it had continued much longer, I should have carried my mortifications even to death, by means of my watchings, prayers, reading, and other labors."

Knowing that works would not make him righteous, Luther did not know what could with the result that he became very despondent. The works of St. Augustine fell into his hands. These in turn lead him to seek the Scriptures.

In the monastery with Luther were two men, one a scholar the other unlearned, but both wise unto salvation. One day, entering Luther's cell, where he lay sick with despondency, the aged, unlearned monk, after speaking with Luther said that he was not able to answer his questions. Then, turning him to the creed, he repeated again and again, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." Here!", cried the aged one, "is the answer. Do not only believe that there is forgiveness for David, for Peter, and for Paul, but that there is forgiveness *for you!*" With this the old man left. Staupitz, Vicar General of the monastery came another day to see Luther. Noting his agony he exclaimed,

"Why do you torment yourself with all these speculations and high thoughts? . . . Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that He has shed for you; it is there that the grace of God will appear to you. Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins throw

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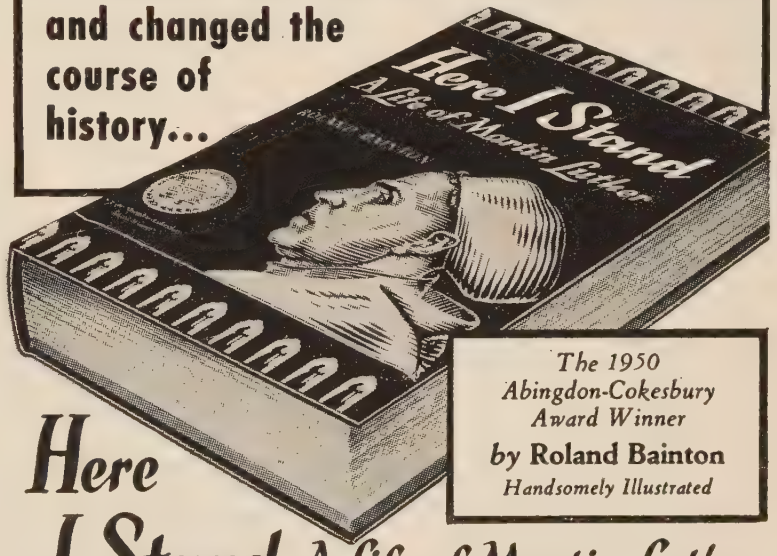

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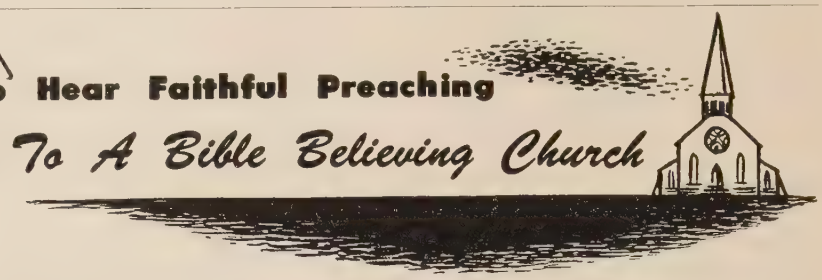

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Tomorrow

(*Continued from page* 15)

at least four new villages that have turned to God. This took place in the Luku area, which is the entrance to the Salween in its northern district. There are something in the neighborhood of 400 new believers there. It happened in the area where the local deacon got a reviving last year when he confessed his sins midst 'strong crying and tears' in the public gathering."

From that same province: "The Sunday morning congregations now are made up mostly of the country folk, men and women coming in late in their huge straw hats and rough clothes, just as they are from the villages. For these quite often a Min Chia service is held afterwards, as many have not much Chinese." It should be understood that there are several millions of people in China known as the tribes people. They are mostly in the southwest, and are divided into several groups speaking different languages. There has been a real awakening among many of these. Another blessing has come among the Tibetans. Many people do not realize that while most of our modern knowledge came to us from the southern approaches to Tibet, out through India, that the influence of the lamas spreads in a northeasterly direction from Tibet, and that perhaps the largest lamasaries are outside of Tibet proper, and in China. The Gospel has penetrated to this group; portions of the Scriptures have now been translated into Tibetan and are finding their way to the heart of that once inaccessible land.

Another great minority group in china is the Moslems. In April of this year the missionaries had a special two weeks' effort to evangelize Moslems. All of the missions had special prayer for Islam, and many were reached with the Gospel. This has aroused some reaction, and within the last few weeks some Moslem tracts against Christianity have appeared.

Sinkiang province is the wild west of China. This vast stretch of land reaches up toward Russia from central China, flanked by outer Mongolia on the north and Tibet on the south. George Hunter, of the C.I.M., labored in this province for fifty years, and saw almost no fruits of his labor. But within the last year there has been a definite movement to Christ, and six local churches have been established around Urumchi, the capital, and an association of other local churches has been formed. In Urumchi the group has grown to 300 and 400, and within the past few weeks a new building to hold 700 has been begun. Shortly before the end of his service in that part of China, Hunter came down to Shanghai and spoke in the China Bible Seminary, in one of the suburbs of Shanghai, Kiang wan. There was a girl student who had one day come to the door of the Seminary and asked for admittance. Her hair was over her eyes and she was a seedy, unlikely prospect. They asked her if she didn't want to attend one of the other, secular schools in the neighborhood, but she replied that she had come there because she wanted to learn the Bible. They took her in and she began to make great progress, not only in the Scriptures but also in her personal appearance. She was greatly moved by the testimony of Mr. Hunter and announced that God had called her to be a missionary in Sinkiang province. She finished her schooling in the midst of all of the various troubles of the wars, foreign and civil. She went first to the province of Yunnan to the southwest. There she was courted by a young man who determined that he wished to marry a Christian wife. She refused him because she said that God had called her to Sinkiang province. After some time the young man came back, bearing with him a parchment, appointing him to be postmaster of Urumchi, the capital of Sinkiang. The girl accepted him and the couple was flown into Urumchi (well over 2000 miles) at government expense. She started her missionary work, and the Lord blessed it so much that her husband, Mr. Li, resigned his position with the post

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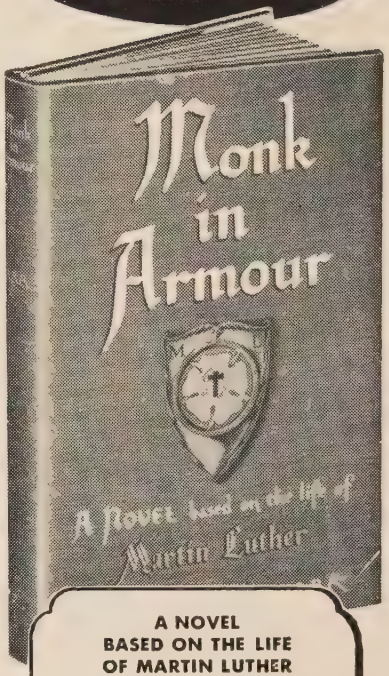

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This report from China will be continued in a subsequent issue (D.V.) with information concerning the printing of Christian literature and the attitude of the universities toward Christian students.

The Two Genealogies

(*Continued from page 7*)

class. He spoke of the contradiction between the Matthew account of the genealogy of Jesus and that of Luke. I went to him after the class and told him that in the interest of truth he should be willing for me to present to the class the absolutely contrary view. Thus it was announced that, the following week, Dr. Hyde would give me one of his lecture periods and I would answer the arguments against the historicity of the New Testament. The class included Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and agnostics, and I detected no small curiosity as I announced my purpose to refute the arguments of my chief.

First, I admitted definitely that there were two genealogies. The lines run parallel from Abraham to David, but then Matthew comes down to Jesus by way of Solomon the Son of David, while Luke comes down to Jesus by way of Nathan the son of David. In other words the two genealogies are the lines of two brothers and the children become cousins. When I state that Luke's genealogy is that of the Virgin Mary and Matthew's genealogy is that of Joseph, I am not merely following the persistent tradition of the early church, as Dr. James Orr states it, but I am setting forth the only explanation that will fit the facts. The whole point of the difference lies in the fact that Solomon's line was the royal line and Nathan's line was the legal line. For example, the present king of England had an older brother, now the Duke of Windsor, who had a prior claim to the throne of Britain. Suppose that Windsor had been the father of a son by a real queen before he abdicated. It can readily be seen that such a child might be a strong pretender to the throne in case there was no other heir apparent.

Nathan was the older brother of Solomon. But the younger brother took the throne. Nathan's line ran on through the years, and ultimately produced the Virgin Mary. Solomon's line ran on through the years and ultimately produced Joseph. Matthew does not say that Joseph begat Jesus, but that he was the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus. And Luke uses a word for son that includes what we would call a son-in-law. But the greatest proof of all lies in one of the names in the account of Matthew. Some one might wonder of what value would be the genealogy of a stepfather of Jesus. The value is that the inclusion of the genealogy proves that Joseph was not the father. In the eleventh verse of Matthew's account there is the name Jechonias. In the use of that name there is one of the greatest proofs that Jesus is the son of Mary and not the son of Joseph. For Jechonias was accursed of God with a curse that took the throne away from any of his descendants. "Thus, saith the Lord," we read in Jeremiah 22:30, "write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah." Not one of the seven sons (1 Chron. 3: 17, 18), of this man ever possessed the throne. No carnal son of this man could have been king because of the curse of God. If Jesus had been the son of Joseph, he would have been accursed and could never have been the Messiah.

On the other hand, the line of Nathan was not the royal line. A son of Heli would have faced the fact that there was a regal line that would have possessed the crown and would have contested any claim that came from the line of Nathan because of the long rule of Solomon's line. How was the dilemma solved? It was solved in a manner that is so simple that it is the utter confusion of the agnostics who seek to tear the Bible to pieces. The answer is this: The line that had no curse upon it produced Heli and his daughter the Virgin Mary and her Son Jesus Christ. He is therefore eligible by the line of Nathan and exhausts that line. Joseph, in turn, exhausts the line of Solomon. How can the title be free in any case? A curse on one line and the lack of reigning royalty in the other.

But when God the Holy Spirit begat the Lord Jesus in the womb of the Virgin without any use of a human father, the child that was born was the seed of David according to the flesh. And when Joseph married Mary and took the unborn child under his protecting care, giving Him the title that had come down to him through his ancestor Solomon, the Lord Jesus became the legal Messiah, the royal Messiah, the uncursed Messiah, the true Messiah, the only possible Messiah. The lines are exhausted. Any man that ever comes into this world professing to fulfill the conditions will be a liar and the child of the Devil. The

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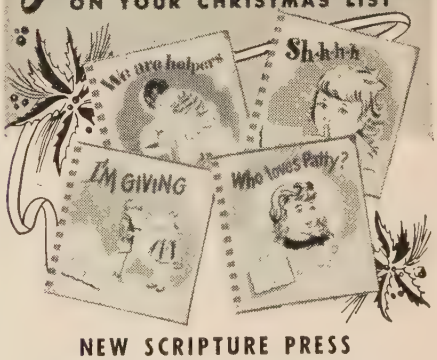

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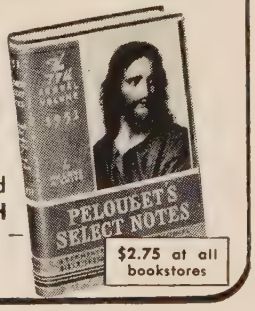

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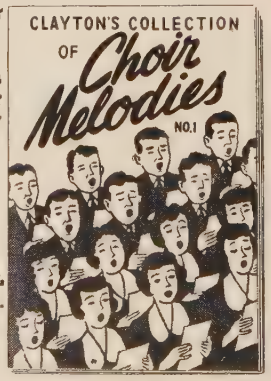

Lord Jesus announced that the attempt would be made, for, describing the coming of the future Antichrist, the Saviour said, "I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).

The argument that I have just set forth is the argument that I set forth in the class room of the University of Pennsylvania on that day. I had in the room copies of the Douay Version of the Bible, accepted by Roman Catholics, of the Old Testament in a translation by the Rabbis, accepted by the Jews, and copies of the Bible in the King James and the Revised Versions. I had men of each of these faiths checking the references as we read them in all versions. When I had finished in a stillness that had grown more and more tense, I declared to the men that I knew on the evidence of my own spiritual experience that these things were true. I had put my trust in this Saviour, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. When I put my trust in Him, He gave me new life through His atoning work, and my faith was founded on the solid reality of the historical facts of the incarnation of God in Christ, the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

I shall not forget how the men applauded, and how Catholics came and thanked me for establishing thus the Virgin Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and how Protestants thanked me that I had given them the realization that our faith is not a diaphanous gossamer, fruit of our wishful whims, but that it is indeed established on the rock of divine revelation. And from time to time, through the years, I have met men who have come up to me after my Bible conference lectures in various cities, and have reminded me that they were in that group that day, and that they had never forgotten the demonstration that the Christian faith, though of the nature of faith, rests on solid fact.

This is one of a series of sermons on the epistle to the Romans which the Editor is preaching on The Bible Study Hour radio program. Other studies in this series will be printed here from time to time.

God in Christ

(*Continued from page* 17)

It is almost a grotesque way to state it, and yet you will catch my meaning when I say that I am perpetually inclined to say to the men who have these high and noble ideals of Deity, but who deny my Christ, what Samson said to the Philistines:

If ye had not plowed with my heifer,
Ye had not found out my riddle.

In the light of these considerations, we turn to the declaration of the text, "God was in Christ." This, then, is the meaning of incarnation. God answers the human necessity; enshrines Himself in humanity; thinks, speaks, chooses, acts through human channels; comes into the very midst of human history, after man had begun to write that history; and thus gave humanity the one and only Man from whom the lines flung out into immensity include God as He really is.

All that was found in the perfect manhood of Jesus may be projected, and the result will be the truth about God. Fall back if you will upon my simple illustration of the projector. See in this same picture of your New Testament that which you put into the lens, and when the light shining through it projects the figure full of truth and unsullied splendor on the canvas, I see God. Every line is a line of beauty, and every expression of the face is full of beneficence, and yet of righteousness. I come back to this Man of the New Testament, and I follow Him and watch Him, and I take the things I see and fling them out, and I find God. I will take, for illustration, these self-same things to which I have made reference—the mind, and the will, and the force. Now I must leave you to wander at will, through these Gospel stories, and I hope some of you may, and watch the working of the mind of the Master, anywhere and anywhen; and when you do so, let the lines pass out until they fill the infinite spaces, and you will have found the working of the mind of God. Mark every effort of Jesus, every putting forth of strength. See it in its purpose, watch it in its method, observe it in its victory, and fling the lines out, and you will find that He is vindicated in what He said. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." There is perfect harmony between the two.

Mark the mind of Jesus well in its essence by observing its activities; it encompassed vast eternities, and compressed them into the simple speech of childhood. I have taken up an old sea shell, and have put it to my ear,

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being told when I was a boy that if I would I could hear the ocean. And I have put it to my ear, and I have heard the ocean. Of course I heard it; the shell was made by the ocean, fashioned by the ocean, was of the ocean, and the ocean of the atmosphere repeated the action of the atmosphere of the ocean, and I heard the sweep and the music of the sea in the shell. Quite reverently—the figure is an imperfect one, I know—I put my ear and listen when this Man speaks, and He speaks in little words, all human language: "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Oh, my masters, put that shell to your ear this day, and the infinite speech of eternity is singing itself through your soul, and as you obey you find rest.

So there came into human history two thousand years ago a Man through whose personality, whether of mind, or of will, or of force, I fling the lines out into immensity, and the result is God. A new revelation of man has resulted in a new revelation of God.

At the back of all the activity of this Man love was the motive. The expression of His activity was service rendered to others, and all the way I see Him flaming in white hot anger against everything that bruises and hurts; and whether I watch Him taking children in His arms and blessing them, or watch Him when in quiet dignity He pronounces the eight Woes upon a guilty city, it is ever the vision of God that is breaking on my life. "God was in Christ," and what is the result? We have found God, and He is a God of joy and a God of sorrow, a God intimately interested in all the details of human life, a God forever active; and all these things I have come to know through the Child, and Boy, and Youth, and Man of Nazareth.

Did I say that God answered man's method, that man's method is that of projecting man into immensity, and God adopted it? And did the way in which I said that make it appear as though God were turning from His own first purpose, and accommodating Himself to human failure? By no means. That is God's return to first purpose. He made man in His own image and after His own likeness. And man, true to himself, might have flung out upon the canvas of eternity his own image, and have found God. The most intimate relationship existed between man and God in the divine economy. But when man shut his eyes to the far flung vision, and began to live as though that upon the earth which was material was the whole of himself, then he became distorted, iniquitous—exactly the same meaning is in the two words—sinful, sensual; and then, lifting his eyes to the Heavens, were shadows indeed, and all his knowledge of God was based upon the knowledge of his fallen self, and was evil. But in Christ we have the very effulgence of His brightness, and when all that He is in humanity is seen and enlarged, we have found God.

And one final word as to the purpose, "reconciling the world unto Himself." Man's misconceptions of God have resulted in man's hatred of God. I want you, if you will, to think of that, and think of it carefully. You tell me that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and I agree with you. But I ask you, Why is the carnal mind at enmity against God? And from the very letter of Paul that declares that the carnal mind is enmity against God, I make another quotation. The carnal mind does not know God, nor can it; I need not argue it. But whence the enmity? The enmity is the outcome of ignorance. You say we are far away from the idolatry of our Hebrew Bible, with its Baal and Moloch and Mammon. I am not sure, but I will not press that. We are far away from the idolatries of ancient Greece and Rome. Again I am not sure, but will not argue it. But you are not far away, or humanity is not far away from its hatred of God. It does not express itself in brutal and vulgar language always. It expresses itself in the West End in the fact that the name of God is tabooed, and you must not mention Him. Men do not love God. Why not? They do not know Him. The old German sang well and truly, and you remember Wesley's magnificent translation:

> O God, of good the unfathomed sea,
> Who would not give his heart to Thee?

And whenever a man gets that vision of God, he gives his heart and everything else to Him.

But though humanity has had a revelation of God in incarnation, the incarnation as revelation does not reconcile men to God, neither can it. The birth of Jesus was the birth of a Man perfect in Himself, but other men will not be reconciled by that birth. The old prophet saw far beyond his own age, and I quote you his language: "When we see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." Do you imagine for a single moment that the prophet meant that there would be no beauty in the Servant of God when He came? I do not so read the prophecy. There was no beauty that

would appeal to men. Why not? Because they are blind and cannot see. And here is the root of the trouble with the world.

"God was in Christ" is a great word, the meaning is not exhausted by the birth and life of Jesus. We must go on, and include the cross. The cradle demands the cross; or else I have seen a man, strangely other than I am, and I shall hate Him because His purity rebukes my impurity, and His spacious and spiritual and eternal conceptions are a perpetual rebuke to my clinging to the dust of my materialism and the devilish sin that I love. Such hatred was the cause of His crucifixion. That is why they crucified Him.

And then, to face another mystery as infinite as the first, God in man suffered, as man apart from God suffers. And out of that came the fulfilment of all that began on the morning of the birth of Jesus. And when at last, by the infinite mystery of that dying, the life of that self-same Christ is communicated to men, they see Him as they had never seen Him, and they find God as they had never found Him; and in the vision there is at once illumination and energy.

So—let us remember this also—while we sing our carols at Christmastide and rejoice in the presence of the Child, not by His coming, not by the beauty of His Babyhood, the strength of His Manhood, the glory of His moral character are we saved, but by that final mystery to which this all led, the mystery of His Cross; and by the way of His death I find my way back into His life for illumination and for energy. It is thus that we find God, and not only find Him intelligently, but find Him in victorious relationship and fellowship; and, to use the daring and marvelous and awe-inspiring language of Peter, we are made "partakers of the divine nature."

And so we have attempted to look a little beneath the surface, and have been compelled ultimately to look at something infinitely beyond the birth and life of Jesus. We know God through Jesus. No other interpretation is correct. How important then that we should know the Christ and know Him intimately. And to do it we must begin at His cross. He is known, not by outward contemplation, but by inward revelation; and that inward revelation comes to the men who meet Him at the one trysting-place He has provided—His cross. And so I leave you at the cross, for there we must begin; and by the mystery of its cleansing tide and its regenerating forces we come into sympathy with Jesus, the Man of Nazareth, and find our God, and so our peace.

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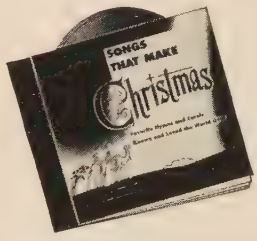

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The Virgin Birth

(*Continued from page 9*)

at the thought of losing his betrothed on account of her supposed unfaithfulness, was given the marvelous verse in Isaiah about the virgin who should bring forth a son, Emmanuel, which explained all. He married her to protect her. He was warned in another dream to flee into Egypt, and, yet again, to return to Nazareth. As to why Joseph should recall the visit of the Magi, and Mary that of the Shepherds, we do not feel able to hazard a guess, but we are glad we have both.

We would very much like to know the links in the chain between Joseph (who seems to have died between the journey to Jerusalem when the Holy Child was twelve years old and the time of His baptism by John) and the evangelist Matthew, but that also is hidden from our eyes. It is a fairly probable guess that the Matthew genealogy was derived from some written record in the possession of Joseph, which went to show that he, though a village artisan and in humble circumstances, was the lawful heir to David's throne, and the inheritor of the promises made to David concerning his seed.

It is even more patent that Luke preserves the story as told by Mary. How did he get it? According to one view of inspiration, he might have obtained it directly by divine revelation without any human links at all. But if the English revisers have translated correctly, that he traced the course of all things from the first, it implies that there were links, and with Mary.

Luke was in Palestine with Paul somewhere about the year 58 A.D., when Mary, if alive, would have been near eighty. Did he find her out, and hear it all from her own lips? What a thrilling interview that would have been! Or did she tell one of her daughters? Or leave a written document? We wish we knew, but the transmission does not affect the credibility. The first two chapters of Luke's Gospel are quite obviously told from the woman's point of view. The language is distinctive. Whatever we may think of C. C. Torrey's contention that there were Aramaic originals of the Gospels, there is certainly an Aramaic original here, either written or oral.

The canticles, of Zachariah, and Mary, and Simeon, are more in the fashion of the Old Testament than the New. It is curious that whereas Luke speaks of "His parents," Mary on one occasion, overwrought by anxiety, said, "Thy father." He corrected her. "Wist ye not that I must

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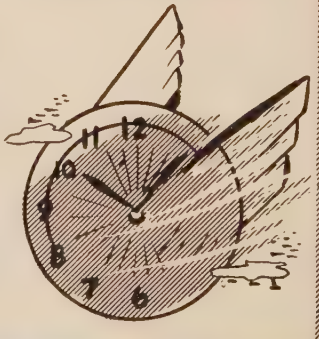

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be in My Father's house?" We may readily believe that there was a social problem in the home at Nazareth. It was almost inevitable that Joseph should be spoken of, in the village, as the father, and maybe in the family too. What else could they say? Evidently there was no scandal. Years later, the people of Nazareth say, "Is not this Joseph's son?" and "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?"

The woman's point of view is everywhere to be seen: the annunciation, the babe leaping in the womb, the swaddling clothes to wrap the Child in, the presentation in the Temple, the words spoken by Simeon treasured in the mother's heart, the notice of old Anna, the canticle so like that of Hannah in the Old Testament. And, when once we have got over our astonished revulsion against such an idea as that of a child born without an earthly father, when we realize that though it could not hapen to anyone else it is entirely in keeping with Him, we begin to see that the whole story is in keeping too, and that it rings true. The impression made upon our minds is that of the godliness, humility, and virtue of this woman. We must not rate her too low because Romanist tradition has rated her too high. The suspicion that inevitably fell on her must have been heartbreaking to a woman of her type. It was Joseph, and not she, who found comfort in the text about a virgin mother in Isaiah. The proof of Mary's account of those great happenings is the character of her Son, but it was thirty years before that was manifested. It is quite probable that she never spoke of it, after Joseph, the one person in whom she could confide, was dead. After the resurrection, it was time to tell, and there was hope that it would be believed.

If Luke did not get the story, directly or indirectly, from Mary, where did he get it? Not from the first Gospel. The differences are too great. For instance, there is the puzzling feature of the two genealogies, with no hint anywhere as to how they were to be reconciled. Each seems to be unconscious of the other. We can only theorize. Perhaps the best explanation available is that Matthew gives us the royal line, running not always from father to son but from each man to his legal successor traced down to Joseph. Luke on the other hand gives the list of Mary's ancestors, in the natural line from son to father, but with the husband's name inserted instead of the wife's because of a convention that female names do not appear. It has been suggested that Joseph and Mary were kin, and that Luke gives their common genealogy, but this is doubtful. There is Jewish evidence that Heli or Eli was the name of Mary's father. Jesus was widely recognized as son of David. The blind men called Him so. Paul tells us so three times over. He Himself asked the Jews how the Messiah could be David's Lord and also David's son. This seems to indicate that there was not only a legal but also a blood relationship, which could only come through Mary.

Where could Luke have got the idea of a virgin birth, we ask again, if not from Mary and not from the first Gospel? Greek mythology tells fables, often coarse fables, of heroes with a divine father and a human mother, but nothing resembling the Christian doctrine of a virgin mother. It has been suggested that the idea comes from the prophecy in Isaiah (7:14). Here a good deal turns on the actual words used. The Hebrew word is *almah*. Probably the nearest English equivalent is "maiden." It means a young woman, and implies virginity without stressing it. It is applied to Rebekah, and to Miriam (Gen. 24:43; Exod. 2:8. The other occurrences are Psa. 68:25; Prov. 30:19; Song 1:3; 6:8). When virginity is stressed, the word used is *bethulah*. That a remarkable Person was to be born is confirmed by Isaiah's further prophecy, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given . . . the mighty God." His name was to be Emmanuel, God with us.

The contemporary prophet Micah also refers to a notable birth which has evidently been spoken of before in the language of prophecy: "Until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth," and this is in connection with the going forth of a ruler from Bethlehem Ephratah, and is obviously messianic. But there is no evidence that the Jews of the first century were expecting that the Messiah, or anyone else, would be born of a virgin. The Greek translation of Isaiah made a hundred years before Christ did indeed translate *almah* by *parthenos*, "virgin," though this is rather surprising, and later Greek versions render it differently, probably to avoid giving too much away to Christian propagandists. It seems clear then that both Isaiah and Micah foretold the birth that was to take place at Bethlehem, but that it was little if at all recog-

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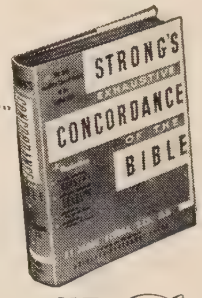

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nized by the Jews as miraculous. Therefore Luke is not at all likely to have obtained the idea of a virgin birth from Matthew, or pagan sources, or from the Jews. He got it from Mary.

Does modern medical or biological knowledge throw any light on the subject? It may be that in the providence of God the telling was entrusted to a physician, to meet and answer this question. But there is nothing in Luke's narrative that would not be just as likely to be written by a layman. As is well-known, his medical mind is often plain enough later in the Gospel, but not here. Nor can modern medical science add anything. The phenomenon called parthenogenesis by the biologists, not uncommon among insects, has nothing to do with the virgin birth of the Bible. It means that fresh individuals may be produced by adult females without the cooperation of any male. It is true that the unfertilized ovum of a sea urchin can be made to develop by treating it with certain chemicals; a frog ovum, not fertilized, may be made to develop as far as the tadpole stage by pricking it with a very fine needle. In higher animals, no such results can be obtained as far as we know at present. Modern science, then, has nothing to teach us about the subject before us.

Let us finish by stating our conclusions in as few words as possible. Belief or disbelief in the virgin birth of Christ is the acid test of Christian orthodoxy. We ought not to rest our belief in the deity of Christ on the story of the virgin birth, but follow the method of the Gospels and establish faith in Jesus Christ as a divine Person first, and then find in the narrative of the first and third Gospels the only satisfying explanation as to how such a Person came to be born. The birth stories are derived from the only two individuals who could know all the truth, Joseph and Mary. The verse in Isaiah about the *almah* is a prophecy of the virgin birth, but did not give rise to expectation of it by the Jews of the first century.

The student who wishes to read a thoroughly scholarly and well documented book on the subject is advised to consult J. Gresham Machen's "The Virgin Birth of Christ" (Eternity Book Service, $3.00). The preacher who wishes to preach about it should by all means read Alexander Whyte's "Bible Characters: Joseph and Mary."

Sunday School Lessons

(*Continued from page* 28)

tions of our lesson, involving fellowship with Christ, as indicated in the title of our lesson.

The symbol which Jesus uses concerning Himself in John 15 is the familiar but striking one of "the true vine." Israel was spoken of in Isaiah 5 as a choice vine, planted in a vineyard on a fruitful, fertile hill. It did not, however, because of self-will on the part of God's people, produce the good crop He anticipated, for instead of the fine cluster of spiritual fruit of Galatians 5:22, 23, He found nothing but wild grapes. Jesus expresses his disappointment in a similar figure, no doubt based upon this passage in Isaiah as we read in Matthew 21:33-46, Mark 12:1-12, and in Luke 20:9-18.

The True Vine

Now Jesus in our lesson declares that He is the genuine and true vine, which will not disappoint His Father, the husbandman, for the branches, which consist of those who are in organic relationship and fellowship with Him, will produce the fruit He desires.

The branches have no life except that which they derive from the vine, from Him who is the Life. And the vine can produce its fruit only through the branches. Therefore He is complete in us (Eph. 1:23), a great wonder, and we are complete in Him (Col. 2:10), and without Him we can do nothing. Dare we say, that without us He can do nothing! The greatest "labor union" in the world is the body of saints in fellowship (union and communion) with Him, we as laborers together with Him (1 Cor. 3:10), and He working with us (Mk. 16:20).

The secret of this life which bears the fruit, much fruit, and more fruit, is that the branch "abides" in the vine, the only source of this life. This, in other words, implies fellowship with Christ, and it is, by no means a spasmodic relationship. It is a "constant." The spiritual life of an ardent Christian does not rise as the thermometer falls in winter, and fall to a precarious level as the thermometer rises in summer.

This fellowship in and with Christ is a real partnership. And the Senior Partner takes good care of the junior partner. That is the thrill, the joy of it. And we may say that He furnishes the capital, for the Head of the corporation endows the junior partner, bankrupt by nature, with the talents, the

powers and the opportunities for service, so that the saints may be perfected, the body of Christ be edified, and all come to a perfect fellowship in Christ, in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Pruning and Purging

Pruning, purging, and "chastening" are at times necessary for the health of the vine. Christ knows those who are His, and who have His life abiding in them. Should any one merely "unite with the Church," but not be in vital relationship and fellowship with Him, the Husbandman cannot use him, cannot work in him and through him His good pleasure and must cast him aside.

Sin, sinful practices, sinful and selfish desires, will always hinder, disturb and indeed make impossible a vital fellowship with Christ. Uncleanness in any form will prevent growth in the Christian life, for it makes impossible fellowship with the pure Christ. Therefore, Jesus says to His disciples: "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you" (v. 3).

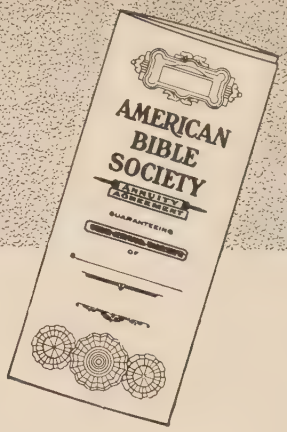
If there ever was a man who was interested in the growth of his own Christian life, it was Paul, who fully realized that it was not possible apart from fellowship with Christ. And he was sincerely interested in the spiritual life and health of his many converts. He writes one letter after the other to the Churches which came into being as the result of his preaching in the course of his missionary journeys. And, realizing the value of a single human soul before God, he writes to individuals in order to help them, to encourage them, to advise and direct them in particular crises and problems, as we see in his letters to Philemon, Timothy and Titus.

Paul's Witness

In his letter to the Christian group in Philippi, that is, to the Philippians (3:8-16), we shall find the second printed portion of our lesson. At least a dozen times do we find the first personal pronoun "I," as he discusses his personal relationship with his Lord, but only that he may the better exhort those to whom he is writing as to how to grow in grace and in closer fellowship with Christ, whose name as Christians they bore. This exhortation begins at verse 15 with the words "let us," as also in the middle of verse 16, "let us walk by the same rule"; and in verse 17, "Brethren, be followers together of me."

Paul had much to be proud of as to his ancestry (v. 5), and if one would know more about him, Acts 22:3, 2 Corinthians 11:22, and other similar passages will reveal it. But Paul learned one thing, and that was that fellowship with Christ did not depend on one's relationship to Abraham, and secondly, that growth in grace did not proceed from the observance of ceremonial ritualism.

So the time came when he had to abandon as profitless to his spiritual life all those things of which the flesh might well feel proud, so that he might find his real life and joy in Christ. "I count all things but loss," he says in verse 8, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ (that is, faith in Him), the righteousness which is of God by faith."



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It was the privilege of the writer to teach a Bible class for twenty-three years which he mentions only to say that the motto of the class was the same as the ambition expressed by Paul in the first line of verse 10: "That I may know Him." May this be the heart's desire of every one who studies this lesson assigned for the last day of the year.

Paul would also know the power of His resurrection, for it is the resurrection life of the living Lord which pervades the being of the Christian, and which makes possible the growth of which our lesson speaks.

Then there is the fellowship of His suffering, a strange desire, from which one might be supposed to shrink. But Paul and many other saints have learned that, if we would be in fellowship with Him, we must be willing to walk where Jesus walked, and blood stains may be found in the foot prints of His earthly career. And they who suffer with Him shall also reign with Him, not forgetting that He was made perfect as our Saviour through suffering, and we are not above our Master.

Verse 11 is an interesting one. Paul had no doubt about a resurrection, but he wished to attain unto the resurrection (not of the dead, but) "out from the dead." For there is a resurrection called the first resurrection (Rev. 20: 5), the resurrection of the Just, the resurrection of life (John 5:29).

Paul was very humble. He had not yet reached the goal of perfection, but he was on the way! Christ had apprehended him, arrested him, laid hold on him, turned him around, and set him on the right road toward a better goal than the one he had been aiming at before his conversion. He appreciated this special kindness shown him, undeserving as he was, by the Lord Jesus. He was therefore determined to be faithful unto the end, for he hoped some day to lay hold of the prize of the high, holy, and Heavenly calling for which Jesus had so graciously laid hold of him.

To be so minded he exhorts his Christian brethren, that together they might grow up into Him and in Him, who is the Head, even Christ, of the noble and glorious fellowship of the saints, a glorious Church, to be presented by the Son to the Father, without spot, wrinkle, or any such thing, holy and without blemish.

A Happy New Year in the Lord to all our readers, as we, forgetting those things which are behind, reaching forth unto those things which are before, press toward the mark for the prize of the high, the holy, and the Heavenly calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Daily Meditations

(*Continued from page* 19)

less. The King came that we might have life and that we might have it more abundantly (John 10:10), and spake to us that our joy might be full (John 15:11). We know these symbols, of course, as those of the body and blood of our Lord, and we feed upon them in the communion service. Our communion with Him is because of the giving of His body and the pouring out of His blood, and by them we live and joy in Him.

LORD, MAY WE FEED ON THEE.

December 19

PRIEST (14:18)

The King is revealed to be a Priest. This is highly significant, for throughout the long period from Moses to Christ, priests were forbidden to reign and kings were forbidden to enter into the functions of the priest. The absolute separation of religion and the state is a mighty Bible principle. There is only one who is capable of being both priest and king. This, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has chosen us to be kings and priests before Him (1 Pet. 2:9). Priests deal with souls and kings deal with the social interests of men. No man is capable of doing both, except the Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are in Him.

LORD, WE THANK THEE THAT ALL GLORIES REST IN THEE.

December 20

THE MOST HIGH GOD (14:18)

This name for God is all the more remarkable because it is found four times in this paragraph, the place of its first usage in the Scripture. The Hebrew *El Elyon* means *The Highest God.* All the gods of the nations are idols, and behind these idols, demons; but our God is the Being who is *supreme.* It is significant that God was known to this Gentile king by this name. Down through the years, from Noah, through Shem, this knowledge of the true God had been preserved by Him for this moment. Abraham was to be blessed by this priest, who was not of Aaron's priesthood, but who was a picture of the eternal priesthood of the Lord Jesus.

LORD, BEFORE THEE, THE MOST HIGH, WE BOW.

December 21

HE BLESSED HIM (14:19)

When we are empty we need filling. At the end of a day of battle the Lord comes with His provision, and that is enough. Filled with the bread and the wine of God, the soul wants nothing more. The man of faith may be met by the rulers of this world's darkness when the conflict is over, but the bread and the wine of the King of Righteousness and Peace so fills them that they turn away from the food that the world would give. As if to say, "If He is thy God, if thus He meets thee by His priest, in an hour of weakness feasting thee with bread and wine, for which others have labored, and which cost thee nothing, then thou needst not the gifts of Sodom's fallen king."

LORD, FILL US WITH THY BLESSING.

December 22

POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (14:19)

The supreme God rules over all. This, significantly enough, is the title that Lucifer picked out in the moment of his fall,

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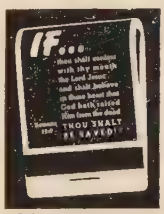

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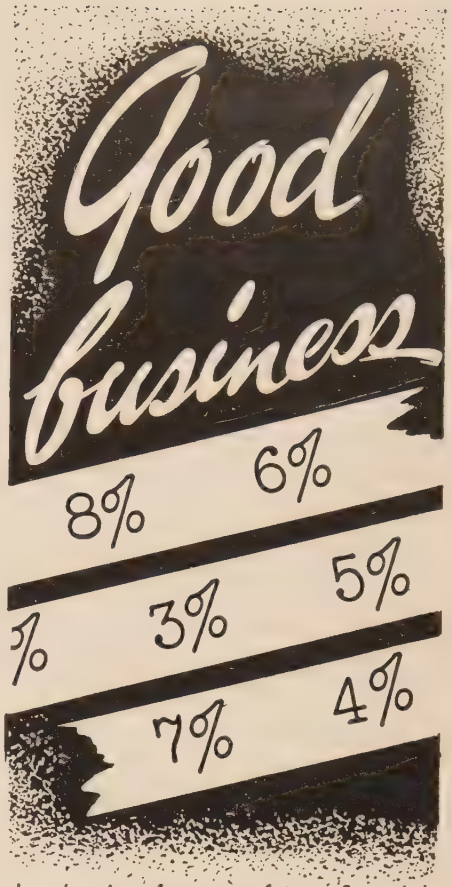

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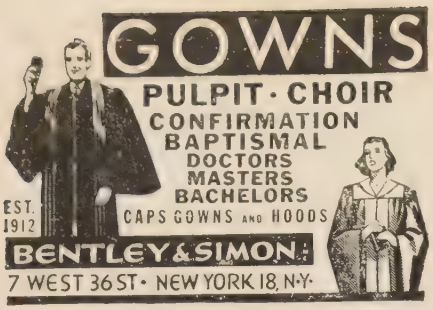

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to emulate and to supplant. He did not say, I will ascend. . . I will be like the Redeemer. For to be the Redeemer it was necessary for the Lord Jesus to go down (Phil. 2:6-8). But in saying, "I will ascend . . . I will be like the Most High," Lucifer showed the nature of his pride and his greed. When we are blessed of the Most High God, then we have Him and care naught for the material things of Heaven and earth. He is our highest good from henceforth.

LORD, MAY WE REALIZE THAT POSSESSING THEE, WE POSSESS ALL.

December 23

AND BLESSED BE THE MOST HIGH GOD (14:20)

It is striking to see this solitary figure of the king of Salem standing there between Abraham and God, bringing down a stream of blessing upon Abraham and sending up a stream of worship. The downward blessing is a blessing of deeds—God touches us with provision of life and joy. We cannot give anything to God, so that when we bless Him it is in a different sphere—we pour up to Him the acknowledgment of His praise. The nature of His being requires the acknowledgment of His worth, and that acknowledgment of His worth is worth-ship, worship. The Lord told the woman at the well that the Father seeketh true worshippers who will worship Him in Spirit and in truth. It is almost pathetic to think of the fact that God has to hunt out among believers, those who will do what He wants.

LORD, MAY WE TRULY BLESS THEE.

December 24

AND HE GAVE HIM TITHES OF ALL (14:20)

The victor became a giver. The importance of this is set forth in Hebrews where we are told that Abraham's great-grandson, Levi, was in Abraham's loins when he bowed down before Melchizedek, and that this demonstrates the superiority of the heavenly eternal priesthood of Christ over the earthly, temporary priesthood of Aaron (Heb. 7:9, 10). There is a great illustration of the fact that we may involve our great-grandchildren by some act of ours, and it had better be an involvement in blessing than an involvement in the curse. The revelation of God as the Most High struck through to Abraham's being, for from then on he found his only good in Him, and refused to be enriched from any other quarter.

LORD, MAY WE FIND EVERYTHING IN THEE.

December 25

TITHES (14:20)

In this act there is one of the most profound gestures of the Bible. The New Testament says of Melchizedek, "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils" (Heb. 7:4). In this act there was the forefiguring of the abolishing of the whole of the Jewish system and the establishment of Christianity upon its roots. Here is one of the greatest lessons of the method of Bible study that can be found. Here is a verse that would seem trivial and unimportant to the casual reader, yet it is to be the fulcrum on which the lever of the Word is to be placed that shall pry apart the whole of the structure of the Jewish law and religion. The temple shall fall because of this verse. The priesthood of Aaron shall be done away because of this verse.

LORD MAY WE LEARN THAT THERE IS NOTHING TRIVIAL WITH THEE.

December 26

HE GAVE HIM TITHES OF ALL (14:20)

If Abraham had given the king a present we would have understood it as a matter of courtesy betwen equals. But Abraham takes quite a different attitude. He does not stand before Salem as an equal, but takes the place of submission at once. The fact that he gave tithes is the acknowledgment of a sense of duty. Melchizedek came as the minister of God, performing a duty. He stood between the Most High and Abraham as a mediator, and thus Abraham had a duty to perform toward him. The present would have been given to a king as a friend; the tithes are paid to the representative of God.

LORD, MAY WE NOT ROB THEE BY WITHHOLDING THY DUE.

December 27

GIVE ME THE PERSONS. . .TAKE THE GOODS (14:21)

It all belonged to Abraham by right of conquest, for the king of Sodom had lost it in battle. But he now comes to Abraham, wanting his subjects back, and willing to compromise to get as much as he could. Little did he know how much he was going to get. Now he asks for the captives and is willing to let Abraham take the goods. Here is another temptation, great as other tests which had gone before. The worldly king is offering a fellowship that would be understood by all as a participation with him in all that was possessed. But Abraham has eaten the bread and drunk the wine which Melchizedek has given him, and strong in that strength he is ready to resist.

LORD, KEEP US FROM COMPROMISE.

December 28

I HAVE LIFTED UP MY HAND UNTO THE LORD, THE MOST HIGH GOD (14:22)

This is the third revelation of God which Abraham has received. At Ur it was the God of glory who appeared unto him (Acts 7:2). When Abraham reached Bethel God appeared unto him as Jehovah, and he builded an altar to him there (Gen. 12:8). Even though the Lord did not reveal all that was in that name of redemption, it was a great advance in the knowledge of God. But now God appears to Abraham as *El Elyon,* the Most High God, possessor of Heaven and earth. With every succeeding need there was a new revelation of God, and a new entrance by faith into the knowledge that was being given. Abraham

"lifts up his hand"; that is, he makes an agreement, a vow. He will be possessed by the Possessor.

LORD POSSESS US.

December 29

I WILL NOT TAKE A THREAD. . .A SHOELACE (14:23)

If God is the Most High, possessor of Heaven and earth, He is able to take care of His servants; and Abraham, who has seen His glory and followed Him from Ur, is not going to compromise by taking strings and shoelaces from a Sodomite king. For if he had done so the Sodomite would have claimed a part of his glory forever. If the world can claim part of the success of a child of God then the sting is taken from the witness. But if all the glory is given to God, and if all the resources come from God, then the world cannot take any part of it, and the believer becomes, as Paul says "As unknown and yet well-known; as having nothing and yet possessing all things (2 Cor. 6:9, 10).

LORD, HELP US TO DESPISE THE WORLD'S GIFTS.

December 30

LEST THOU SHOULDST SAY, I HAVE MADE ABRAHAM RICH (14:23)

When the uncompromising stand is taken, the soul is thrown back on God. Abraham had strengthened his own faith by announcing that it was all in God, and all blessings were from God. Now he would not be tempted to come down into Sodom for any favor. Ezra did the same thing, and when he was in difficulty, his stand forced him back on God. He said, "For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, the hand of our God is upon all them that seek Him, for good. . . . So we fasted and besought our God for this" (Ezra 8:22, 23).

LORD, MAY WE DEPOSIT ALL OUR RESOURCES WITH THEE.

December 31

THE PORTION OF THE MEN WHICH WENT WITH ME (14:24)

Abraham did not try to make his companions live up to his standards. He was going to live by faith trusting utterly in the Lord, but Aner, Eschol and Mamre were not spiritually advanced enough to do this. They were to get their portion of the booty. Abraham's portion was the Lord. Older Christians should never seek to force younger Christians to live according to advanced standards of which the younger ones have no personal experience. It is vain to set up standards of Christian walk for babes in Christ which only a mature Christian can know from the daily supplies of grace which God gives. If Abraham had insisted that the young Canaanites refuse the booty, they might have gone away without it in their hands but they would have had the lust of it in their hearts.

LORD, HELP US TO SEE THAT EACH ONE IS ANSWERABLE TO THEE ALONE.

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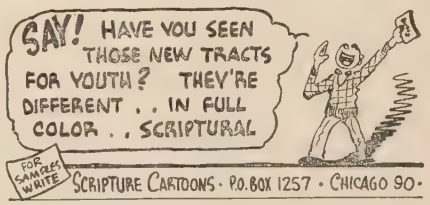
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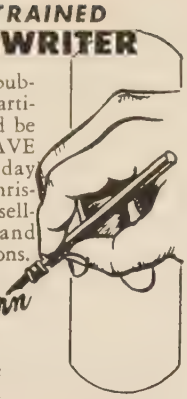

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That Ye May Know

(*Continued from page* 13)

we should live as sons? This is our privilege. Our Lord is "far above every principality, and every authority, and every might, and every dominion, and every name which is named, not only in this age, BUT IN EVERY ONE ABOUT TO BE" (1:21).

AND WE ARE IN HIM! He in us, we in Him; what more can we need? "All things are under His feet." We are His body. In Him, all things are under our feet.

It may be as you read these paragraphs your heart thrills with the truth of our study. But as you finish the study you place ETERNITY on your table or in your briefcase and return to time and life. The sad part of it is that you not only put the magazine away, you lay away the eternal truth also. You begin to worry and fret, you look for the burdens you momentarily dropped in order that you might get in under them once more. Your moment of restfulness is succeeded by restlessness once again. You have put eternity—eternity where you may dwell in the Heavenlies with Christ, in power and victory—you have put it away. You have given mental assent to what you have read, but you will not let your heart live it. Doubtless you agree with me. But I hear you ask, "How may I live in the Heavenlies? How may the apostle's prayer be answered in my life?" Paul, himself, suggests the first step. We read in Hebrews: "Thou has put all things in subjection under His feet, for, in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we see not yet all things put under Him (2:8).

Why is it difficult to live the spiritual life in a natural world? Why are we, a heavenly people, so often grounded on earth? We allow circumstances to determine our manner of living. Note what Paul is saying. In so many words he says, we agree that the Lord is above all things in the place of power. But there are some things in experience which do not seem to evidence it—"We see not yet all things put under Him." With Paul we see the things which are not under Him. But unlike Paul, we dwell on the things. We fuss, we fume, we fret. We worship the things, we become slaves to our experience. Not so Paul, for he adds: "BUT WE SEE JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, (And how does he see Him?), crowned with glory, and honor; (And then, why did He suffer?), that He might taste death for every man" (2:9).

Where are you looking, believer? Are you looking outward and inward at your circumstances, or are you looking upward to Him. There is no choice. The answer to this prayer is the upward look. You must forget self, you must ignore your position that you may gain His. He died that you might live—with Him. You are elected, redeemed, sealed, enlightened—God has done His part. Now you must decide as to whether you will live a life of spiritual poverty or spiritual riches. Your look will determine your choice. Who will be King of your life? Will you? Will Christ? Oh, may we pray.

King of my life, I crown Thee now,
Thine shall the glory be;
Lest I forget Thy thorn-crowned brow,
Lead me to Calvary.

May I be willing, Lord, to bear
Daily my cross for Thee;
Even Thy cup of grief to share,
Thou hast borne all for me.

Lest I forget Gethsemane,
Lest I forget Thine agony;
Lest I forget Thy love for me,
Lead me to Calvary.

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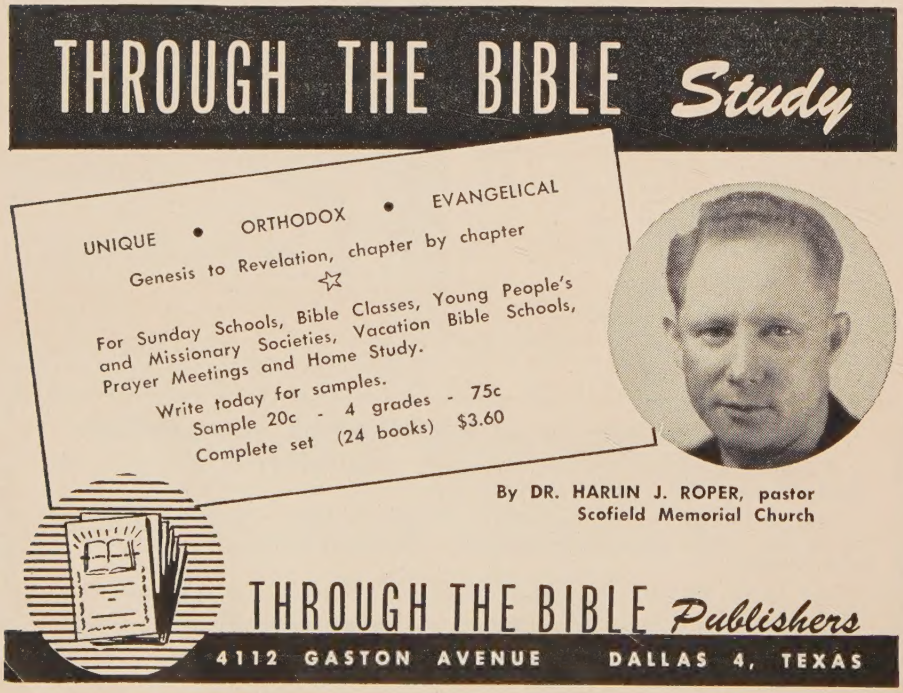
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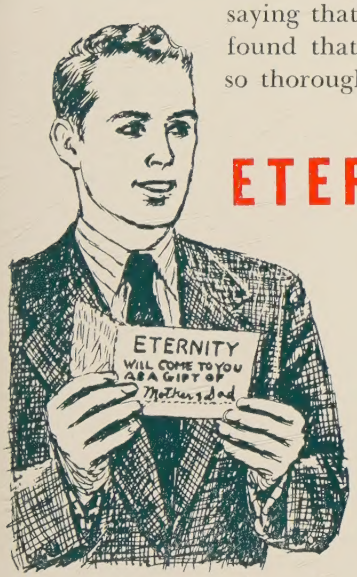

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